

SOCCER

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WEEKLY

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GST INCLUSIVE

POWER SURGE STUNS SHARKS

By Daniel Kuzlow

Many have tried and many more have failed, but finally after sixteen rounds of the competition and an unbeaten home record of 720 minutes the Olympic Sharks have been beaten at their fortress Toyota Park.

In a much anticipated Sydney derby, Nick Theodorakopoulos returned to his former club and with the efforts of John Buonavoglia and the rest of his Parramatta Power outfit helped inflict a two one defeat on the ladder leaders of this season's National League.

Although Ante Milicic had given the defending champions a 21st minute lead from the penalty spot following a foul by Matthew Langdon, little Buonavoglia became the big hero for the visiting side with a strike on the half hour mark and the killer blow after 81 minutes.

It was from a quick break that Parramatta equalised. Alvin Ceccoli picked the ball up on the edge of the 18 yard area, before playing a one-two with Brendan Renaud down the left. Ceccoli then played a terrific ball to the near post for Buonavoglia to head home.

Ceccoli was again involved in the game's winner when he cut out the defence and then crossed the ball to the running and unmarked Buonavoglia who had the simplest of shots to pick up maximum points.

The result has meant that the seemingly untouchable four point barrier between Olympic and the remaining 12 other teams has been cut to just a single point and with blood now spilt, more than one team will pounce on the wounded leaders.

For the Power meanwhile, victory has moved them to 18 points, equal with Adelaide City who sit in fifth place.

Sunday's other games saw the honours shared between the Northern Spirit and Newcastle United, while South Melbourne accounted for Sydney United thanks to a lone goal right on the stroke of half time.

At the United Sports Centre, a Vaughan Coveny strike deep into first half injury time help lift South Melbourne into third place.

Northern Spirit moved off the bottom of the table after playing out a lifeless 0-0 draw with Newcastle United at Brookvale Oval.

In a game of few chances, the excitement was reserved to referee Con Diomis who dished out a total of six yellow cards.

Earlier weekend results saw Perth Glory continue their rich vein of form with a five-nil demolition of the hapless Football Kingz.

Matt Horsley opened the scoring for the home side after only eight minutes when he latched on to a Damian Mori through ball to bury his shot past Michael Utting. It was two nil only three minutes later when Shane Pryce reacted first to a squared ball played across goal and from the initial corner Pryce rose to nod home from close range and the game was effectively sealed for the Glory midway through the first half when Bobby Despotovski coolly converted good lead up work from the goalscorer Hoslely.

German import Andre Gumprecht provided both second half goals in the 54th and 85th minutes to round off a more than convincing victory for the title chasing side.

The return of Zoran Matic proved the perfect tonic for Adelaide City to score a resounding three nil victory over the hapless Marconi Stallions who with the loss stay rooted to the foot of the table.

A legend in the City of Churches, Matic's tenure as caretaker coach got off to the perfect start with goals from Claudio Pelosi, Diego Pellegrini and Iain Fyfe.

On 11 minutes Pelosi weaved a stroke of magic to work his way into the area before the Italian import deceived his way past a static Marconi defender to fire his shot low and hard past Michael Turnbull for the game's opener.

That lead was extended eight minutes later by fellow Italian import Pellegrini, who headed home unchallenged, Goran Lozanovski's perfect corner kick.

City's third was scored ten minutes before half time when Fyfe easily headed home a cross home from the left hand side after an exchange of passes and a pin point cross.

Australian Under 20 international Matthew McKay came off the bench to score a timely goal and earn his Brisbane side a point against Wollongong.

Wollongong had taken the lead in just the 9th minute, when Shane Lyons was able to score at the second bite of the cherry, with Lyons scrambling home the rebound after Jason Kearton parried down his initial header from a corner.

However, McKay fresh from representing the Young Socceroos at the recent Oceania Nations Cup qualifying tournament proved to be John Kosmina's trump card as his 86th minute strike made the journey from Queensland to the New



Anthony Doumanis of Sydney United is challenged by Robert Liparoti of South Melbourne during the NSL round 16 match between Sydney United and South Melbourne at the Sydney United Sports Centre.

South Wales south coast a much more worthwhile venture.

McKay on as a 78th minute substitute for Stuart McLaren popped up and his snap shot from the edge of the area into the bottom corner in the 86th minute,

maintained Brisbane impressive run of late and extended its unbeaten streak to six matches.

Meanwhile Melbourne Knights played out the bye.

SPIRIT'S BRIGHT FUTURE

By Brendon Davis

Northern Spirit will soon announce the NSL's largest sponsorship, a massive three year deal worth over one and a half million dollars.

Speaking exclusively to ABSW, the Spirit's new owner Tony Gelonesi explained he "is close to finalising the major sponsorship worth over half a million dollars annually for three years". "There is paper on both our desks and we're very close to finalising it" he said.

The new sponsorship, which will underwrite the viability of the North Sydney based club, will become the largest corporate sponsorship in the NSL.

Critically the massive sponsorship is basically a cash sponsor-

ship enabling the club to budget appropriately for its future in the NSL.

Gelonesi also revealed Spirit will participate in the January transfer window in an effort to boost their squad for an assault on the final six.

And Gelonesi told ABSW in another exclusive that he had several options available to him to for selling the shares in the Spirit owned by Rangers.

Rangers failed to honour various commitments, especially players. "Two players were supposed to be provided for the season and two more in January" but its well-known Rangers didn't deliver.

He said he developed a careful business plan identifying various opportunities for the Spirit, taking advantage of the three good (junior soccer) associations in the

Spirits area. We have developed a player progression passage, which is attractive for quality footballers said the Spirit owner.

Gelonesi said corporate approached have welcomed his plan, which he will be revealed on his return from a business trip to the United States.

Northern Spirit have also resolved the matter of the franchise fee payable to the NSL following the change in major shareholding. Despite possible precedents enabling him to avoid the payment, Gelonesi said his lawyers have reached an agreement with the NSL to pay the fee of \$250,000 in full by 30th June 2003.

Gelonesi told ABSW he wants to do the right thing by everyone involved in soccer so they are paying the franchise fee and further, Spirit are now one of the most financial members of the NSL.

By Mark Stavroulakis

At the tender age of 18, current Excelsior striker Brett Holman is living the life of a professional footballer.

Ever since his early beginnings at clubs such as Gladesville Hornsby and having spent some time at the NSWIS, young Holman knew that gaining a professional contract overseas was his ultimate dream.

Not many Australian fans had a real chance to see Brett strut his stuff in our very own National League whilst the striker was part of the Parramatta Power, however towards the end of his stint with the side in season 2001/02, the starlet did grab headlines for scoring goals and putting in top performances.

These top-notch performances were seen by Australian coach Ange Postecoglou who had no hesitation but to pick him for the U17

ABSW EXCLUSIVE:

BRETT HOLMAN: "I STILL WANT TO PLAY FOR AUSTRALIA"



Young rising Australian star Brett Holman shown reading the best.

Joey's side that took part in the U17's World Cup in 2001 held in Trinidad & Tobago.

It was at this event that many scouts from various countries in Europe observed the potential this young Australian had.

Not long after the World Cup the then 18-year-old was snapped up by

Dutch giants Feyenoord on a lucrative five-year deal but due to his young age was loaned to sister club Excelsior in his first year that just past.

2002 was a year 'Crocodile Dundee' as he is known in Holland will never forget.

Scoring his first ever goal in the Dutch Eredivise, being the youngest member of the squad and fairing in almost every game of the season so far (a rarity for any Aussie at his age to be on the team sheet for a first team squad abroad) and the controversial issue regarding his decision to stay with his club rather than play for the U20's last December was only a few incidents that has kick-started this promising young star into one of the players to watch for in the future.

Read on Page 5 for an exclusive and comprehensive interview on Brett Holman compiled by ABSW editor Mark Stavroulakis.

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BY DANIEL KUZIW

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Feyenoord midfielder **Brett Emerton** is still waiting on offers from other European clubs and fears that he has missed out on a dream move to the Barclayscard Premiership.

Emerton, home in Sydney during the winter break in the Dutch league, is desperate to play in England but has received no offers since the transfer window reopened two days ago.



Brett Emerton: Yet to receive offers for a possible move to the English Premier League.

"I think my game suits the English way of playing but I have to accept the transfer market is depressed and I must be patient," the Australian told the 'Sydney Daily Telegraph'.

"There's a slight chance something could happen but there's nothing concrete."

The 23-year-old international is in the third year of a four-year deal at Feyenoord and admits to being a lifelong Manchester United fan, but has heard from no-one since Liverpool tabled a £6m bid early last year.

The expected rush to sign players once the transfer window opened up again has not materialised and many players - including Emerton - are left to wonder if a move will ever come.

"I'm still young and hopefully the opportunities will come to move on," he added.

★★★★

French outfit Guingamp are on the verge of signing Olympic Sharks midfielder **Greg Owens**.

The surprise Ligue 1 title contenders, who went into the winter break placed third, have agreed a deal with Owens' club Olympic Sharks and the 21-year-old is expected to move to France in June.

The same club have also handed a trial to Australian star Joel Porter.

★★★★

A ton of news is filtering through AA this week regarding Aussie players in Italy.

Tribalfootball.com have reported that AC Milan are close to clinching first refusal on Empoli midfielder Vince Grella.

Milan trainer Carlo Ancelotti wants the Australia U23 international for next season and the club's transfers chief, Ariedo Braida, has been in lengthy



Marco Bresciano: Will not be allowed to leave Parma.

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talks with Empoli officials about a summer deal. Milan are determined to get a commitment from Empoli in the coming weeks, knowing that both Juventus and AS Roma are also chasing the Aussie youngster.

However in news surrounding another young up and comer Parma will not allow midfielder Marco Bresciano to leave the club in January.

There was speculation that the Australia international could be loaned back to former club, Empoli, while Modena have also expressed an interest.

However, Parma football chief Arrigo Sacchi contacted Bresciano's representatives this week to tell them that he would not be loaned out.

Bresciano has struggled to make an impact at Parma since his summer move, but is understood to have been struggling with several niggling injuries.

Lastly Atalanta youngster Adrian Madaschi has been shipped out on-loan to Pistoiese. The Australia U20 international defender is expected to go straight into the Serie C outfit's first team. Madaschi is regarded as one of Australia's brightest young defensive talents, but has so far failed to make a first team breakthrough at Atalanta

★★★★

Leeds United midfielder **Land Socceroo** captain **Paul Okon** is confident Australia will more than match it with the old enemy when the two nation play out a friendly match at Upton Park in February.

"The gap is so tight at international level that we have no need to fear anybody," Okon told the 'Daily Telegraph'.

"England haven't been playing well recently. Hopefully we will take advantage of that", he added.

Currently Okon is enjoying the limelight at the Yorkshire based club. He has become a regular starter in the Leeds outfit that is coincidentally in the middle of a revival having snared 13 out of a possible 15 points.

"It's very physical but I'm enjoying it. It's not dirty but the pace is frantic. You have to stand up for yourself, he concluded.

★★★★

Middlesbrough boss **Steve McClaren** has challenged **Tony Vidmar** to win himself a new contract that will see him stay at the Riverside.

Vidmar this weekend stood in for the injured Ugo Ehiogu in the FA Cup match against Chelsea in the knowledge that he can cement a first team place with the England international

ruled out for two months with broken ribs.

McClaren said: "Losing Ugo is a massive setback for us but it is there for Tony to impress."

"He has been invaluable so far. He's played right-back, left-back, centre-back and in a three and done very well."

"We had Tony here for two weeks and then were allowed to sign him after the deadline by FIFA because he did not have a club and it has really paid off for us."



Tony Vidmar: Has been challenged by Steve McClaren to win himself a new contract at Middlesbrough.

★★★★

Portsmouth defender **Hayden Foxe** insists he has put last year's problems with West Ham United behind him.

Last season Foxe was caught up in a nightclub incident that attracted nationwide attention and ultimately saw Foxe's contract at the Hammers torn up.

But this week ahead of Pompey's big FA Cup clash with Manchester United tomorrow, the Aussie told *The Sun*, "I was drinking too-much and the incident didn't help my career at West Ham."

"I knew I had let a lot of people down. I embarrassed my family and friends, people who had always been so proud of what I'd done."

"They were the people I felt sorry for, not me."

"But West Ham manager Glenn Roeder clearly wasn't impressed."

He added: "The biggest lesson I've learned has been to take it easier on the booze."

"In Portsmouth it's much simpler to keep a low profile. There was so much going on in London and I found it very difficult to say no."

"I'd go out for one beer and the next thing I knew I was outside a club in the West End at 3am."

"There's no way I would have been prepared to play in the First Division a few years ago but Portsmouth was my only chance after what happened."



Hayden Foxe: Insists his worst days are behind him.

"My career's been a bit of a shambles really and I've definitely got regrets. "But there's no better job in the world and I'm so lucky. That's what gets me through - and I'm not about to let a few beers ruin it."

★★★★

Socceroo Craig Moore continues to receive the plaudits from his club after his gutsy during Rangers' 3-1 Scottish Premier League win over Dundee at Ibrox.

The Australian defender completed the game despite suffering from an illness that saw him throw up on the pitch at one point.

Rangers' boss Alex McLeish paid tribute to the Aussie's resilience. "Craig wasn't well. We have had players in the last two or three games who have put the club before themselves and I appreciate that."

"Peter Lovenkrands was struggling for the last two or three games but agreed to play. Claudio Caniggia has been toiling a bit and Craig had a stomach upset the whole game."

"He was nauseous before the game and physically sick during it but he has been an inspiration to us throughout the season and it was great to see him get through it."



Craig Moore: Put in a gutsy display earlier this week in Rangers' victory over Dundee.

Olyroos tour canned

Australia's preparations for the 2004 Athens Olympics suffered a major blow when Soccer Australia (SA) pulled the plug on the Olyroos' involvement at a tournament in Qatar early next year.

Socceroos boss Frank Farina told The Herald Sun: "I'm obviously disappointed but I don't know the reason (behind the pullout)."

"It was a very good tournament against quality opposition so it was a good one for us."

Brazil, China and the Czech Republic have all been confirmed as starters in the tournament.

Earlier this month, new SA chairman Remo Nogarotto was hopeful that the tour would go ahead despite the governing body's

critical financial predicament.

However, with the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) holding back \$290,000 in government funding since October, SA was in no position to cover the cost of airfares and player payments - estimated to be about \$100,000.

ASC spokesman Peter Logue stated: "The Under-23s receive \$45,000 annually, and part of it has already been allocated, so they cannot blame the Sports Commission for not going to Qatar."

Meanwhile, the ASC has pledged \$250,000 for March's Matildas Cup in Canberra, which pits the Australian women's national side against Mexico, Sweden and South Korea.



Olyroo coach Frank Farina was disappointed after Soccer Australia pulled the plug on the tournament in Qatar.

Breakaway NSL meetings?

There is continued speculation that a breakaway national league is being planned.

A small Victorian newspaper has reported that 5 Victorian teams met at a secret location last week to discuss the breakaway national league. The clubs involved in the secret discussions are believed to include Heidelberg United, Altona Magic, Essendon Royals, Preston Lions & Whittlesea Stallions.

At least 14 clubs from Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, NSW, Queensland & Victoria are prepared to go it alone and form a league outside existing structures such as the state federations & Soccer Australia.

Heidelberg President Elias Deliyannis compared it to the Rugby League Super League that occurred a few years ago.

A potential starting date of November 2003 has been set.



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FORCE TO STAY

Adelaide City Force has confirmed it will play its remaining home games at Hindmarsh Stadium.

Force has reduced the hiring fee of Hindmarsh Stadium by 40% for the remainder of the year. This follows on from other reductions in previous seasons to bring the total reduction over the past few seasons to over 70%.

During the same period of time the cash strapped club has increased ticket prices by approximately 30%.



This reduction in costs provides Adelaide City Force with an ideal opportunity to partially address its declining attendances by reducing the tickets prices at Hindmarsh Stadium.

There are many alternative pricing strategies that could be pursued to bring fans back to Hindmarsh Stadium.

At a minimum Force will be able to determine if the price elasticity of soccer fans makes discounting its ticket prices a viable proposition.

Thommo backs Bozza

Former Socceroos coach Eddie Thomson believes Mark Bosnich can reclaim his place as one of the world's top keepers despite being charged by the Football Association (FA) following a positive drug test for cocaine.

Thomson, who handed Bosnich his national team debut, told The Australian, "I've been trying to get in touch with him since the news first broke, but without luck.



Former Socceroo coach Eddie Thomson believes Mark Bosnich will once again reign as one of the world's best keepers.

"He has been under a lot of pressure and I just wanted to let him know he has my support.

"I've had a lot to do with him over the years and anyone who really knows Mark Bosnich will tell you he has the inner strength and belief to overcome this setback."

Bosnich has fallen from grace during his 18-month spell at Chelsea and was banned from all football-

related activities by the FA until his hearing against charges of breaching doping regulations and bringing the game into disrepute are heard.

He has until January 10 to respond in writing to the charges, though no date for a hearing has yet been set.

It appears certain that Chelsea, who summoned Bosnich to an internal meeting, will tear up his \$110,000-a-week deal and finally put an end to their troubled union.

Bosnich could be slapped with a two-year international ban if found guilty of the charges against him.

Even at 31 and with time fast running out for Bosnich to resurrect a career that has failed to live up to expectations, Thomson remains positive.

"Mark has too much to offer football in Europe and I still think he has a huge role to play with the Socceroos. He'll be back bigger and better than ever," he said.

"He is still the best goalkeeper we've produced."

Professional Footballers Association chief executive Gordon Taylor cited former cocaine addict Paul Merson as an example when he insisted that Bosnich could revive his career.

He told Sky Sports News: "The player can undergo rehabilitation and can be classed as clean and come into the game after a period of time, but that depends on Mark."

"It is a very sensitive situation. A lot depends on his attitude. Knowing him as I do, I can't believe it is the end of the road or the end of his career."



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MICHAEL BROWN TASTING DUTCH DELIGHT

By Peter Damalas

While Brett Emerton and Joey Didulica are attracting the headlines for their recent displays in the Dutch First Division, one of Australia's rising stars is making steady progress.

Left midfielder, Michael Brown, whose previous experience in Europe includes stints with South Moor and Middlesbrough in the United Kingdom, is part of the youth team set-up at Dutch giants, Feyenoord.

The eighteen-year-old, having recently left Australia, is growing accu-

prepared to give it a go," he said.

Brown was a member of the Under 17s Australian side, the Joeys, that travelled to Miami recently.

"Miami was a really good experience, nice weather. It was important for us to get used to training in the heat and humidity, considering the World Youth Championships are coming up this year" he said.

With seven appearances and one goal beneath his belt at the youth level, Michael Brown is hopeful of succeeding with the Socceroos. And with the support and technical assistance provided by the coaches in Holland, the left footed play-

the World Cup, we can look forward to it," he said.

Life at the current UEFA Cup holders could not get any better for the Australian. The First Division in Holland is widely regarded as an excellent avenue for young players in particular to learn their trade. The success of the youth system at Ajax Amsterdam in winning the Dutch League on numerous occasions, and the European Champions League in 1995, is a testament to the faith placed in youngsters. Edgar Davids, Clarence Seedorf and Patrick Kluivert are examples of what can be achieved with structured coaching from an early age.

"Playing in Holland is unbelievable, it is so much different to life in Australia. There is an added emphasis on the technical side and it is at a much faster pace. With the facilities over here and top coaching, we improve everyday, although it is never easy," he said.

First team midfielder, Brett Emerton, has assisted Brown in acclimatising to football in Europe.

"We've spoken a few times and he's helped me out. Emerton has been here for a while, even though he left at an older age. It was difficult coming over at first, but now I'm settling in and I am more confident. I'm learning the language and speaking to a lot more people," he said.

While he is happy at Feyenoord, Michael's ultimate team is recent Champions League opponents, Newcastle United.



Michael Brown part of the youth team set-up at Dutch giant Feyenoord.

tomed to the demands of playing in Europe.

"I think 18 is a very good age for Australians to try their luck in Europe.

You are not too young and are more ready to go. One might get homesick if they leave any earlier. It all depends on when you are

er could be in contention when World Cup qualifying begins in 2005.

"There are a lot of good players in the Joeys set-up that can become starts of the Aussie game. You could name practically the whole team. I think it is good that Oceania now has a spot in

Matildas Squad Named

National coach Adrian Santrac has named a 22-member Matildas squad for April's Oceania World Cup qualifiers, 18 of which will compete in the 5th Australia Cup starting later this month.

One of the stars of Australia's impressive fifth-placed finish at the inaugural FIFA U19 Women's World Championship last August, 18-year-old striker Hayley Crawford has been handed her first Matildas call-up to be the only new face.

There were a few recalls to the national team as Bryony Duus, Claire Nichols, Danielle Small, and Kristyn Swaffer earned selection.

The squad will assemble on January 15 for a training camp at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra.

The Australia Cup is also to be held in Canberra from January 26 to February 1 and will include Sweden, Mexico, South Korea and the Matildas.

"We are past the point of trialling."

Santrac said via a statement. "We are now at the business end of the cycle."

"These players have been selected on performances in past National Team environments and from form displayed in the WNSL."

"They have earned the right to be the first to cement their place in the World Cup Qualifiers team and hopefully take us through to the World Cup."



Adrian Santrac: The Matildas coach has just named his squad to take on qualifying for the World Cup.

Matildas squad (18) Australia Cup:

Dianne ALAGICH	D
Melissa BARBIERI	GK
Hayley CRAWFORD	F
Rhian DAVIES	D
Bryony DUUS	M
Gill FOSTER (ne THOMSON)	M
Heather GARRIOCK	M
Kelly GOLEBIOWSKI	F
Olivia HOHNKE	M
Tal KARP	M
April MANN	F
Claire NICHOLS	GK
Joanne PETERS	M
Cheryl SALISBURY	D
Thea SLATYER	D
Danielle SMALL	F
Kristyn SWAFFER	D
Sacha WAINWRIGHT	D/M
Matildas squad (22) - Oceania World Cup qualifiers (the above 18 players plus):	
Pamela GRANT	D
Cassandra KELL	GK
Anissa TANN	D
Natalie THOMAS	M/F

VIVA LA FRANCE FOR OWENS

Olympic Sharks midfielder Greg Owens last week was announced as a possible signing for French First Division club Guingamp it was reported in the media.

The 21-year-old is believed to be set for a \$500,000 move to the French side who is coached by Bertrand Marchand.

Marchand spotted the former Young Socceroo at the U20 World Youth Cup in Argentina nineteen-months ago.

The attacking midfielder flies to France in April and must prove to coach Marchand that he has what it takes to strut his stuff in France's Ligue 1.

The former Newcastle United (Australia) youngster who a few years was made famous by his spectacular long-range effort goals, has



Greg Owens: Jets off to France in April for a hopeful European career with Guingamp.

gone through all sorts of troubling injuries this past season and as a test of fitness must show the Guingamp coach that he is fit to kick-off his European career off.

Having undergone two groin operations and a back injury in the past 16 months, Owens only started one match

last season being the Grand-Final against the Perth Glory.

This year Owens has seen only a limited amount of game time however has impressed many onlookers through the time he spent on the pitch.

It is believed that the Newcastle born midfielder's current monthly wage package will jump from \$8000 to \$25,000 in France where he will also have a car and apartment as well.

FIFA player agent Alain Barataud (ABS's French Correspondent) was the main man behind this deal with Owens and believes the youngster will do very well in France's top division.

The 21 year-old stated to the 'Daily Telegraph' that "Once I've got rid of a few niggling injuries I'll be on my way. I want to be 100 per cent when I go there. This is a great opportunity for me but my top

priority in the short term is to get fit and get my confidence back".

Owens isn't the only Sharks player currently circled by European clubs.

Teammate Joel Porter jetted off to Europe last week for a 10-day trial at the same club in France and with a good trial could well see two young Australians fairing in the same squad for Guingamp.

There are currently two Australians playing their trade in France: One being Lille striker Mitef Stergovski who has done quite well at the club and the other is ex-Olympic Sharks striker Nick Carle who unfortunately has failed to make an impact with club Troyes.

Carle is believed to be put on the transfer list by the club and could well see himself at another European club this year.

BELCONNEN GOES PORTUGUESE

By Graham Cooke

Belconnen Blue Devils have taken on the power of Portugal.

The country that nurtured Eusebio to international prominence some 40 years ago, also produces a special style of grilled chicken which is currently served to some five million people a year in Australia through the 30-store Oporto chain.

Recently Oporto opened its first store in Canberra, at the same time signing a sponsorship deal with the Devils who will promote their product at home matches.

Belconnen team members

turned up in force at the store opening in the suburban Woden Plaza shopping centre just after Christmas. The Australian company now plans another outlet in the central business district.

Meanwhile the Camara brothers, Daniel and Stewart, are back in training with the aim of being ready for first-team football within a week.

Daniel, who made 19 appearances and scored four goals last season, has missed this campaign up to now because of study commitments in Canada; Stewart is recovering from injury.

The news on injured defender Matt Cachia is that he is likely to be out for another week or possibly two.

More FIFA gifts for Oceania

Two important international tournaments have been given the green light by FIFA and both represent great news for Oceania, and for Australia.

During the FIFA executive meeting in Madrid that awarded the Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) a direct path to the 2006 World Cup, a decision was reached to extend the money-spinning Confederations Cup beyond 2007.

This decision guarantees a continuing high profile for the Oceania Nations Cup, from which the champions qualify for the

Confederations Cup.

New Zealand is Oceania's representative for the next instalment of the Confederations Cup in France later this year.

The Confederations Cup is a bi-annual tournament that offers the Oceania qualifier the opportunity to boost their coffers and face quality international opposition - both of which are impossible to achieve by playing against regional neighbours.

In addition FIFA has brought the World Club Championship out of mothballs and looks like staging it again as early as 2005.

The tournament has only been played once, in 2000 with South Melbourne holding their own against the likes of Manchester United, Vasco da Gama and Necaxa in Brazil.

The smaller nations of Oceania should also be celebrating with the news that the Asian Football Confederation plans from 2004 to invite a team from the region to take part in its South-East Asian Tiger Cup.

It looks highly likely that an Oceania island nation will receive the invitation ahead of heavyweights Australia and New Zealand.



CASSERLY IN FOR STALLIONS RETURN?

Marconi coach Raul Blanco is hopeful of convincing his board into funding a move for wingback Luke Casserly.



Luke Casserly could make the move to the Stallions this season.

The former Australia international, and an ex-Marconi player, has returned to Sydney after two successful seasons with Sweden's AIK Solna.

Blanco has reportedly agreed terms with Casserly, but must convince his cash-strapped board to fund the deal.

The Stallions would benefit greatly with the inclusion of Casserly at the back especially as Marconi look set to over-turn a poor first round offering into a more fruitful approach.

ABSW EXCLUSIVE:

BRETT HOLMAN: EXCELSIOR'S CROCODILE DUNDEE

FACT FILE

Name: Brett Holman

Age: 18 years old

Current Club: Excelsior - On loan from Feyenoord

Position: Striker

Representative Honours:

NSW State Teams U15-16

Australian U17's & 20's

Former Clubs:

Gladesville Hornsby

NSWIS

Parramatta Power

Nickname: 'Crocodile Dundee'

By Mark Stavroulakis

MS: Having spent a good year and a bit in Holland, how has the transition been from playing Australian football to Dutch?

BH: The one thing I've noticed in Holland has been obviously the professionalism it's displayed. But somehow I've been used to professionalism since my move from Australia, as I was involved with the Parramatta Power who were good in that department.



Brett Holman: Excelsior's exciting Australian striker.

I think though the weirdest aspect has been moving away from home, living on your own and having no support from people you know. Waking up knowing that your not going to see your mum, dad, brother or friends was something that took time in getting used to but slowly slowly its coming through okay.

MS: How many matches have you played with Excelsior and how many goals have you scored?

BH: I've taken part in almost every game which is seventeen matches but have mostly come off the bench.

I've scored just the one goal for the club which was against Twente Enschede, it was more a tap in but

I still got a huge rush as it was my first ever goal for the club and a first in Dutch football - hopefully more goals will flow this year.

MS: Explain the logistics behind your club Excelsior, how does the club work with feeder club Feyenoord?

BH: Feyenoord pretty much owns Excelsior, they were in a bit of financial trouble and they dug them out of the hole a few years back.

Excelsior follows the same pattern as Feyenoord in terms of formation and development wise with the younger kids at the club.

What Feyenoord do is they buy young players who they believe could have a future in the game and loan them off to Excelsior for game time.

Its good for me as it gives me a chance to play in the top flight which in many young players cases is quite tough to do.

You look at some clubs in Italy and England where the players are loaned off to second or third division clubs; I'm lucky to be in the position of playing in the top flight.

MS: Explain the standard of facilities at the club?

BH: Obviously you're going to have a difference between the facilities with Feyenoord and



Already a star amongst the fans - Holman shown signing autographs at training.

Excelsior.

Feyenoord's facilities are unbelievable, it's really not normal. Excelsior's is not on the same standard but do have many fields for training and have a nice stadium.

Excelsior's home ground fits about 5000 people and to be honest it resembles Lambert Park here in Sydney, but every home game is a sell-out which adds that extra atmosphere to the game.

In terms of Physios and massagers and so forth, they are top quality, you'll never be left without one at both clubs.

MS: What's the standard of Dutch football like?

BH: Dutch football is renowned for being really technical and quick but not so much physical. The youngsters here have been taught at a young age skills first then fitness, that is why people are seeing so many young talented Dutch players coming through the ranks in the country.

Comparing it to the Australian league I guess it was much tougher here, it's more physical in regards to tackles.

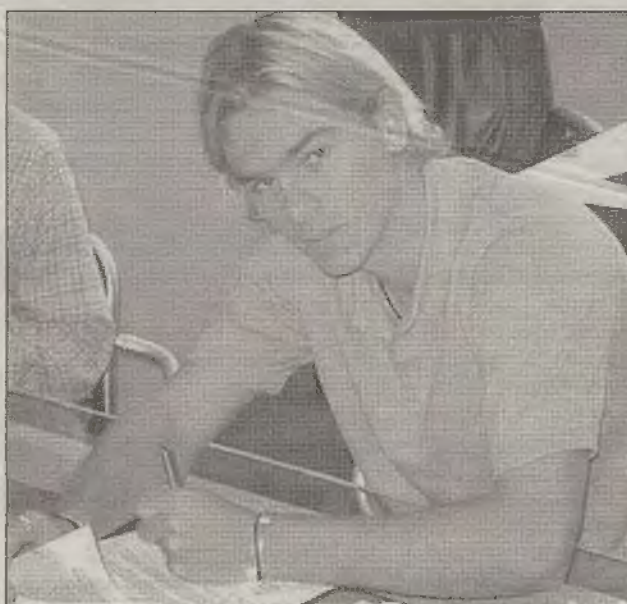
MS: How's your relationship with coach Audrey Costa?

BH: It's really good, he keeps offering me advice on how to improve my game. The good thing is he always talks to me, some coaches seem to get lost sometimes during the year but he's always willing to help me out.

MS: How are you finding the lifestyle in Holland?

BH: Feyenoord is actually quite similar to Sydney but the big difference is like I said before living on my own has been quite tough. The lifestyle is pretty much second to none besides living in England. Everyone speaks English which has helped me out, everybody is pretty friendly and it's easy to get around the city as well.

MS: You have signed a five-year deal with Feyenoord, with this loan move to Excelsior, do they keep you updated as to when you will make the move back to



Signed and sealed - Holman put pen to paper on a five-year deal with Feyenoord last year.

the club?

BH: Feyenoord pretty much play it by ear, they have people watching players on loan from the club at Excelsior and gain their own reports so that is why every game I have to be in good form because obviously that is the only way Feyenoord will ask me back into their first grade squad.

MS: What's the story with you having your own personal fan website? (<http://www.bretholman.tk>)

BH: They are pretty fanatical in Europe about football and a couple of fans over there decided to do a website on me.

It's quite good because people keep in touch with me from home via leaving messages on the message board and they have a look at my stats on how I'm going as well.

MS: You recently came under heavy scrutiny from both coaches and journalists after you decided to stay in Holland with your club rather than flying down for the U20 Oceania Qualifiers, what was the real story behind this?

BH: To be honest a couple of journalists didn't really need to put their word in, both (Club and Country) parties agreed and we both thought that it was settled but things sometimes get blown out of proportion and people said things that didn't really happen.

I hope that Ange still considers me for the World Cup, rumours about me not wanting to represent my country are false, there's nothing more enjoyable then pulling on that Australian jersey.

This event though I had to put up my hand and say that it was tough coming down as I was unavailable. The games that I missed with the U20 side recently showed that there really wasn't much competition and they won by cricket scores and I had six important games coming up in three weeks, which I took part in all.

If I miss out in the World Cup

Its unfortunate that the club has been put on the market but I think that maybe a proposed 10-team competition or maybe taking the year off as instructed by Brendan Schwab could be the way to go in bringing up the league in Australia.

MS: What are your future aspirations both short and long term?

BH: Short-term obviously is to gain a starting position permanently for Excelsior and playing well and scoring goals. Hopefully with good performances at the club, this will alert my club Feyenoord and I guess my long-term goal is to go back there and start. Also going well in my international career, like I stated earlier I still want to represent my country and hopefully I can make the step to either the U20's or Olympic side.

MS: Currently on the books, Feyenoord have the likes of Australian players such as Brett Emerton and young Michael



Brett in action in the Dutch Eredivisie.

out since your move to Holland?

BH: Dave Mitchell was pretty much the man that alerted Feyenoord in the first place so he has done a lot for me so far. 'Mitch' keeps in touch and comes to watch me play a few games and helped me out with the recent U20 decision by speaking to Soccer Australia about my situation.

MS: Do you keep in touch with how things are going in our very own National League?

BH: Every weekend I always log onto the Soccer Australia website and look to see the results and news, and I'm always keen on seeing how my old club Parramatta are doing.

Brown, do you keep in touch with these guys?

BH: All us guys are basically on the same block of apartments as each other so its good to have them there, it brings back old memories from Australia.

'Emo' has showed me around the city, he's a top guy as well as a top player so it's good having him there.

I originally came to the club with 'Brownie', I've known him for a while now through the Australian sides and Power so it's always good to have someone close from back home.



National League Round 16 Reports



Perth Glory

5



Football Kingz

0

By Richard Kreider

The man Mich d'Avray said is worth a dozen points a season, was mostly a bystander between the sticks last Saturday night when the New Zealand club Football Kingz were well and truly dethroned by the reigning Premiers Perth Glory.

Jason Petkovic celebrated his 100th appearance for his club with a clean-sheet in a 5-0 caning, and it was arguably the easiest ninety minutes he has had for quite some time.

The team from the land of the long white cloud walked off Perth Oval with long white faces after becoming the unfortunate victim of Glory's best game of the season.

Much off Perth's success came from their midfield machinery of Adrian Gumprecht, Edgar and Brad Hassell, on top of excellent support from Damian Mori and

Scott Miller.

The Kingz will now need to do some essential soul-searching if they are to prove themselves as serious top-six contenders after such a disappointing loss.

For the Glory however, the healthy score-line has boosted their goal difference above that of leaders Olympic Sharks and now just a point behind after they suffered a shock loss to Parramatta Power on Sunday.

It was also a welcome return to night football and although 'only' 10,092 went through the turnstiles this time, they were given a footballing treat that if repeated - could see the gates begin to return to past levels.

"For some reason there is a better atmosphere at night," said d'Avray. "The players look forward to these games and I'm sure even the spectators enjoy night soccer as well."

Matt Horsely, who had not made a first-eleven appearance since October, was another reason

for Glory's stunning victory and it was capped off with a quality goal after just eight minutes, when he slipped a Mori through-ball past All-Whites 'keeper Michael Utting. If Horsley goals are considered rare, one from Shane Pryce off a deep Scott Miller corner three minutes later was even more of surprise - his second goal in 60 Glory appearances; albeit an ungainly one with his head, which came his way from Jamie Harnwell's cross-goal header.

The visitors couldn't even use the excuse of the match being the world's longest away league fixture, since they had in fact arrived three days before the day of the game.

"The travelling might have played a part in the defeat to some degree but not a five-goal difference," said Kingz boss Ken Dugdale. "The players were fresh enough, they worked hard on Thursday and Friday evening - I just think it was the fact we were beaten by a very good team."

"After those two early goals we were left chasing the rest of the game. We may have had as much possession, but possession means nothing - it is the goals on the board that tell the story at the end of the day," ended Dugdale.

Skipper Chris Jackson and Heremaia Ngata were the pick of the visitor's best, along with Mark Atkinson who worked equally as hard without reward in their back-line.

Glory's third goal was scored by Bobby Despotovski in the 23rd minute, when he guided a Horsley header past the oncoming 'keeper. However, that was to be the Perth striker's last serious contribution to the game, after limping off the park in the 42nd minute with a knock above the right ankle, which came about from being clipped by the lunging legs of a Kingz defender eight minutes earlier.

Nick Mrdja was Despotovski's replacement and it is quite likely the tall forward was wishing he remained on the bench after squandering a handful of scoring opportunities after the break. He did in fact force a 76th minute bye-line centre from Mori into the back of the net but referee



Andre Gumprecht starred in Glory's five-star performance against the Kingz scoring a brace in a five-nil victory.

Matthew Breeze noticed a hand-ball infringement by the forward as he forced the ball over the line. One man who hardly put a foot wrong was Glory debutant defender Mark Byrnes who was rushed into the side in place of head-cold victim David Tarka. He slotted in the backline as though he had been there for years.

The remainder of the game belonged to Perth's German mid-

fielder Gumprecht who scored two classy long-range efforts in the 54th and 85th minutes; his first goals for the club in 15 appearances.

It was a resounding victory that would have also placed the Glory in an optimistic frame of mind for next Friday's vital Round 17 fixture against fourth-placed Newcastle United at Energy-Australia Stadium.



Wollongong Wolves

1



Brisbane Strikers

1

Substitute Matthew McKay equalised with only five minutes remaining to snatch a 1-1 draw for Brisbane against Wollongong in Friday night's national soccer league clash at

top six after a horrible start to the season.

In an untidy match, punctuated by dreadful passing from both teams, Wollongong will look upon the result as a victory squandered after leading 1-0 from the eighth minute

for a corner.

From Dino Mennillo's cross, Lyons' header was parried by Kearton but the young defender scored at the second attempt.

Brisbane coach John Kosmina described Wollongong's goal as "a comedy of errors".

"We just gave up a disastrous goal, very silly," Kosmina said.

The coach was proud of his side's fighting qualities after conceding such an early goal.

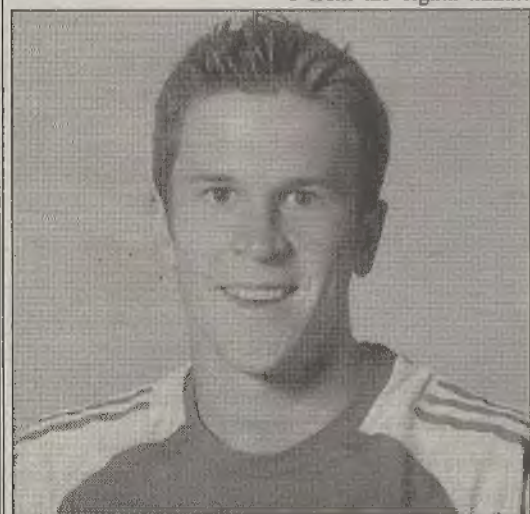
"We didn't deserve to lose. In my opinion, we were the better side. We created a few chances and finally, took one at the end."

Wolves coach Ron Corry was also pleased with his side, though disappointed to concede a late equaliser.

In a mostly dull defensive encounter, Wolves stoppers David Cervinski and Lebanese international Buddy Farah stood out for the home side.

Brisbane skipper Stuart McLaren and Stefanutto were outstanding, while Adam Webber toiled hard in the midfield.

Source - AAP.



Strikers Young Socceroo star Matthew McKay scored his sides equalizing goal in the dying stages of the match to gift Kosmina's side a valuable point from home.

WIN stadium last Friday night.

McKay punished the Wolves for hesitant defending inside their penalty box to score with an unstoppable left foot drive.

The draw extends the Strikers unbeaten run to six games, taking them from the bottom of the table to the fringe of the

and wasting several good second half chances.

Young defender Shane Lyons grabbed his first goal for Wollongong in the eighth minute after an error by Brisbane keeper Jason Kearton almost gifted the home side a goal.

Kearton had his clearance rebound off defender Shane Stefanutto, just wide of the Strikers' goal



Shane Lyons: The young defender scored his first goal for Wollongong in last week's clash against Brisbane.



Adelaide City Force

3



Marconi Stallions

0

By Allan Crisp

Just a couple of hours after Steve Waugh completed his fairytale sporting milestone in Sydney last Friday, Zoran Matic and Ante Kovacevic contrived to stage a NSL season saving drama at the Hindmarsh Stadium.

Matic, made a Dame Nellie Melba-like return to coach Adelaide City Force to its first victory since November 10, while captain Kovacevic celebrated his 200th NSL appearance with a man-of-the match performance.

"We were beaten by a much better team tonight," was the assessment by Marconi coach Raul Blanco.

"Marconi has lost its consistency and we must work harder to regain it," added Blanco, who rued the fact that Angelo Costanzo had suffered an early knock in the highly competitive match.

Matic began the post-match press conference by praising his predecessor Charley Villani.

"I want to thank Charley for getting the side into a reasonable level of fitness," said Matic as he admitted, "It was very uncomfortable for me to return" (as caretaker coach).

"It was surprising that Charley resigned when he did." Asked was he genuinely reluctant to accept the stand-in job, Matic replied, "Bob D'Ottavi did threaten me with a sledgehammer to come back for the rest of the season."

The Force oozed determination and aggression to net twice

in a withering four-minute burst through veteran Claudio Pelosi and classy Diego Pellegrini.

That onslaught saw the home side leading 2-0 after 15 minutes, but the scenario could have been different had David Scarsella not made a brilliant save to deny burgeoning superstar Alex Brosque in the 8th minute.

Brosque swooped on a loose ball to charge goalwards before young Scarsella defied his inexperience to expertly win the one-on-one contest.

--City replied four minutes later as another bright youngster, Nick Budin battled hard to win the ball from Dominic Longo before releasing to Pelosi, who cleverly controlled the ball to clinch his fifth goal of the season with a magnificent drive.

With Goran Lozanovski in top form, the Force continued to raid as the latter hammered a 20-metre drive that Michael Turnbull failed to hold and a corner was forced.

Pellegrini leapt majestically



Force's Italian import Claudio Pelosi bagged his side's first goal in their three-nil drubbing of the Stallions last Friday night.

to head home the inswinging flag kick provided by Lozanovski and the crowd rejoiced.

Scarsella kept the lead secure in the 16th minute with a superb tip over the crossbar to deny Joe Spiteri.

City lost its momentum midway through the first half, but clicked back into gear 10 minutes before half time when Aurelio Vidmar floated a measured lob into the goalmouth where Iain Fyfe headed accurately past Turnbull.

The Stallions rallied from the restart with Robbie Enes bringing two contrasting saves from the confident Scarsella, who denied the Marconi man direct entry with his first attempt by punching the ball over his crossbar before diving low to stop a ground shot.

Young 'City strikers Budin and substitute Scott Tunbridge created havoc in the Stallions defence, a raid climaxing with Budin hitting the near post.

It was Brosque who went close next with a drive that struck the crossbar before Scarsella dived to save the rebound attempt.

Budin squandered an easier opportunity to add to his tally after accepting an assist from Tunbridge, but Budin, like his coach, emerged triumphant from his return.

The cost saving experiment to restrict admission to only the western grandstand was successful with a better crowd atmosphere developed.

Less popular, however, was the issuing of eight yellow cards by referee Greg Levertton, a fact challenged by both coaches.



National League Round 16 Reports


Olympic Sharks
1

Parramatta Power
2
By Peter Damalas

National Soccer League pacesetters, the Olympic Sharks, were brought undone by two almost identical goals from John Buonavoglia. In an often heated encounter, the away side fully deserved the three points as their midfield overran Olympic's ball players.

Pint sized striker, John Buonavoglia was the hero for the Power, as he combined on two occasions with crosses from the left by captain, Alvin Ceccoli.

A first half penalty had given the Sharks an unlikely lead before Buonavoglia's double strike sealed the defending champions' first loss at home this season.

Parramatta's victory was a revenge of sorts for the first round loss at Parramatta Stadium to Olympic, in which two players were sent off. And there was certainly no love lost as a brawl erupted in the opening seconds after a foul by Troy Halpin.

With the absence of Joel Porter (on trial in France), coach Gary Phillips ushered defender Paul Kohler into midfield,

where he provided a defensive option.

The twenty three year old was denied the opportunity of marking his return with a goal as Parramatta 'keeper Liam Reddy, who was criticised for his part in the first round loss, rushed forward to close down the angle for the shot and save his effort.

In the 19th minute, Reddy pulled off another fine save from Parisi after the Young Socceroo was played through by Tom Pondeljak.

The Sharks opened the scoring a minute later, when Ante Milicic was fouled by Ceccoli. The centre forward picked himself up and took the penalty, sending the 'keeper the wrong way.

But like last week's match against the Melbourne Knights, the away team dominated the first half and hit the post following a mix up in the penalty area.

An inspirational run from Ceccoli from the half way line to the left wing led to the equaliser. A perfect outswinging cross found Buonavoglia, one of the shortest players in the NSL, whose header sailed past Clint Bolton.

Apart from bringing Parramatta back into the match, Buonavoglia was proving a constant hassle to the Olympic defence

and was a capable deputy for the suspended Ahmad Elrich.

Power's midfield duo of Wayne O'Sullivan and Peter Zorbas provided a steady platform for attacks, and combined an uncompromising attitude with intelligent passing to the wings.

Former Olympic stalwart, Brad Maloney, came close with a free kick and was later unmarked as his header flew above the crossbar.

The way in which the away team adapted to the pitch, which shows no signs of improving, was another surprising aspect of this Round 16 clash.

A move similar to the first goal brought even greater dividends. In a position of real promise, Ceccoli again found Buonavoglia lurking in the penalty area, who finished with ease to make the score 2-1. For Nick

Theodorakopoulos' side, it was no more than they deserved.

The win will prove a significant boost to the squad, assisted further by the return of Pablo Cardozo from injury.

Olympic Sharks will look back at the two saves made by Reddy in the first period. With a trip to the resurgent Brisbane Strikers this week, supporters

will hope the flowing passing game will return after a fairly limited display on Sunday evening.



'Jockey' John Buonavoglia bagged a brace in Power's two-one win over league leaders the Olympic Sharks.


Northern Spirit
0

Newcastle United
0

NORTHERN Spirit moves off the bottom of the National Soccer League table after their scoreless draw against Newcastle United at

Brookvale Oval last Sunday afternoon

Spirit, who have three deferred matches up their sleeve, are now one point ahead of Marconi on the ladder, but it could have been more if not for their wasted opportunities and poor finishing.

For Newcastle, striker Joel Griffiths got through a tonne of work and always looked dangerous but the Spirit defence was up to the task.

Referee Con Diomis handed out six yellow cards in a match which lacked any spark, particularly in the first half, and was played in front of a disappointing crowd of 1,685.

Joel Griffiths was rather quiet for Newcastle up front as the Spirit defence held their ground and held one of the leading NSL marksman at bay. It was in stark contrast to a round three clash between the



Back to his best: Spirit defender Simon Bell had a sound game for the Northern Spirit.

sides last October when referee Matthew Breeze sent off Spirit players Simon Bell and Voko Tomasevic as their side went down 5-0 to United at EnergyAustralia Stadium.

Defender Bell played superbly in his first starting match after returning from a five week suspension for manhandling Breeze in that match.

Source - AAP


Sydney United
0

South Melbourne
1

South Melbourne players dedicated their first away win of the National Soccer League season to team-mate Robert Liparoti after the defender suffered his second serious knee injury.

The visitors beat Sydney United 1-0 at Edensor Park through a Vaughan Coveny goal but their victory was soured by news Liparoti suffered cruciate ligament damage.

The result moved South Melbourne up to third and knocked United out of the top six.

Liparoti has already undergone surgery on his other knee and today's accident occurred when he twisted his knee when chasing an opponent.

"Everyone was absolutely devastated (but) little things like that can motivate you as well," South Melbourne coach Danny Wright said.

"The players took that as motivation for the three points and they dedicated the win today to Robert. The boys dug deep for him."

Wright said his players showed more spirit than in any other game this season and were greatly relieved to have finally won an away game.

"We've talked a bit this week about players taking on some responsibility and leadership and they showed that today, you can't rely on home crowds."

Wright felt depleted United would probably have won today's game had they been supported by a larger crowd than the generous-looking official attendance of 2,743.

United, which was missing its first choice strike force of injured Commins Menapi and suspended Brendan Santalab, created the best chances in the first half hour.

Midfielder Mile Jedinak hit the



Aerial assault: Daniel Watkins (left) is challenged by South Melbourne defender Patrick Kisnorbo.

bar and was denied by keeper Eugene Galekovic who also foiled an effort from Anthony Dumanis.

"Had we taken our chances it could have been a very different ball game," United coach Branko Culina said.

He lamented his shortage of recognised strikers while South Melbourne had the luxury of former Socceroo striker Paul Trimboli on the bench.

United keeper Vanja Ivesa also excelled, denying Coveny and striking partner Michael Baird in one-on-one situations in the first half.

Wright claimed Galekovic was the best keeper in the competition and felt Coveny's decisive goal which came in time added on at the end of the first half was the best South Melbourne had scored this season.

New Zealand international Coveny headed home after outstanding lead-up work down the left hand side by Baird and Zeljko Susa.

Source - AAP



Battle of the midfield: Souths Bill Damlanos (left) watches United's Anthony Dumanis during last week's clash.

BYE — MELBOURNE KNIGHTS



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SUPER SUMMER LEAGUE

A REVIEW AFTER ROUND 7

With a two week break for the Christmas, New Year festivities, Australian and British Soccer Weekly looks at the performances of the six teams after seven rounds of the Super Summer League Season.

A reminder to supporters, fixtures kick off again on Saturday January 11, 2003.

SUNSHINE COAST

P7 W6 L1 D0 F16 A4 Pts 18

The Sunshine Coast has been the surprise packet so far this season. After a shaky start their form has been outstanding and deservedly lead the table heading into the last three games. One wonders how long it will be before a Sunshine Coast team will be invited to participate in the Brisbane Premier Division as their facilities at Maroochydore are the envy of most Premier clubs and the performances of their youth side in the Premier Youth competition over the last five years have also been outstanding. One thinks it won't be long.

Coach Dave Martin must be delighted with the performance of his young side. At home they play an aggressive game suited to the conditions whilst away from home they play with the confidence found in a winning side.

They are a good all round outfit with Ricketts, Dwyer and Thicker in defense, the experienced Hodge in the midfield and Nathan Kunst scoring at will up front. With Kirk Jackson returning to strengthen the side for the last three fixtures- against Toowoomba at home, the big game against Qld Lions away and Rochdale away- the winning of the inaugural Super Summer League is well and truly in their hands.

QLD LIONS

P7 W5 L2 D0 F20 A7 Pts 15

Using a mixture of Reserve and Youth team players from last season, as well as a number of trialists from around Brisbane, coach Gary Johnson would be pleased with his team's performance with three fixtures remaining.

They certainly seem to have found a number of new recruits to the Lion's ranks in the likes of Chris Di Sipio, Michael Sciardi and Terry Hughes. However what would be a disappointment to Johnson would be the form of some of the more experienced players who haven't played with the same intensity that they showed during the normal season. Certainly you couldn't include Damien Volker and Danny Flasks in that assessment as both boys have played well and have given First Team coach Miron Bleiberg something to think about leading into the new season.

Lion's have also struggled at times to adapt to pitches that are not as good as their own and teams have been able to pressure them especially in the middle of the park.

Their chances of winning the SSL will depend on performances against the Gold Coast away next week and the following week when they face leaders Sunshine Coast at Lion's Stadium. Their final game is a difficult away trip to Lismore to face the Far North Coast Suns.

GOLD COAST

P7 W3 L2 D2 F16 A13 Pts 11

Coach Karl Herdle has bought together a number of talented young players and has turned them into side playing some of the most attractive football thus far in the SSL season. The majority of the squad played in the club's Youth or Reserve grade sides last year with just a smattering of players from the local Gold Coast competition.

After the first seven fixtures, Coach Herdle will be a little disappointed that his side's League position doesn't truly reflect the fine football his team has played but as he is well aware, when you have a young side on the park, they will be a little inconsistent.

This inconsistency was well and truly evident in fixtures three and four. In the first, a home game against Rochdale, Gold Coast played some excellent football but only came away with a point after allowing Rochdale a late equalizer. The following game saw the Coast face a difficult away trip to Lion's when with a

squad that averaged a mere 18 years, they were able to outplay their more fancied host to come away with all three points.

With a number of experienced players making an exodus from the Gold Coast this season, the likes of Aaron McGuinness, Alex Panic and James Odenbreit have shown that they have the ability to step up this year.

The Coast's last three fixtures see them at home to Qld Lions followed by away matches against Rochdale and the Far North Coast Suns.

ROCHEDALE ROVERS

P7 W3 L3 D1 F13 A13 Pts 10

Whilst Rochdale Rovers find themselves only positioned in a mid table position, coaches Keiran Cooper and Paddy Dillon would be quite content with their sides performance so far. The Rovers have gone into the SSL season intent on playing their own players drawn mostly from their Junior Colts and Youth teams from last year.

What they have uncovered and it's something that would make ex-strikers Cooper and Dillon delighted, is the form of striker Mark Cruse. Cruse, who has only just returned from injury has been the catalyst in some of Rochdale's better performances this year, none more so than the late strike that earned the Rovers a point against the Gold Coast in round three.

What has let the Rovers down has been their inability to hold on to the ball for any length of time and this has led to teams constantly pressuring the young Rover's defense. However with Cruse in such fine form the Rovers need only a sniff of goals and they are back in the game.

They also have in Chris O'Connor one of the form keepers in the last Premier Division season as well as Darren Gray playing solidly at the back.

Rochdale's last three fixtures are against Soccer Far North Coast Suns away and then two home games against Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast.

FAR NORTH COAST SUNS

P7 W2 L5 D0 F9 A15 Pts 6

Travelling long distances every other week has not dampened the spirits of the Sun's players in the inaugural SSL season. In fact most teams have struggled to overcome Matthew Kelso's side as they look to improve on their tally of six points so far.

Whilst struggling away from home, the long trek to Lismore as well as the intimidating atmosphere has been the downfall of some of the higher profile teams such as the Gold Coast.

As with Toowoomba, the Suns don't have the depth of some of the other sides and they have struggled because of this. However, as coach Matthew Kelso has said, the team has improved steadily as the season has continued and they have found a self belief and self confidence that will make it difficult for teams in their final three games.

In Jed Wright and Aaron Richter-Steers they have proven that the North Coast of NSW will continue to be a major center for the development of footballers in the future.

The Sun's final three fixtures are against Rochdale Rovers at home, followed by Toowoomba away and the final fixture against Gold Coast at home.

TOOWOOMBA

P7 W0 L6 D1 F5 A22 Pts 1

Toowoomba have found the going difficult thus far. One of the major problems compared with some of the other sides is their lack of depth. As coach Peter Broadfoot will readily admit, this was one of the problems that they knew of prior to the start of the competition. However this has led to Broadfoot being able to experiment with a number of local and country player's eager to see if they are up to the standard.

Most have found the pace and quality of the opposition a little hard to handle at times but this will make them aware of the levels they need to attain in order to be competitive.

Toowoomba's last three fixtures are away to the Sunshine Coast, then follows home matches against Soccer Far North Coast Suns and Qld Lions.

VICTORIAN CHRONICLES



By Brendon Davis

New Year Encouraging for Vics

Both Victorian NSL Clubs start the new-year inside the top six.

Despite both clubs being forced to dramatically slash their playing budgets the Victorians clubs have averaged 19 premierships points which compares favorably with the free spending Sydney Clubs who have averaged only 18 premierships points per club this season.

The Knights have the smallest playing budget in the NSL but defied the doomsday merchants, outperforming their more fancied and affluent rivals with a team described as "a bunch of inexperienced kids".

Daniel Piorkowski is probably the hottest Victorian prospect currently. He's been a stand out at Sommers Street so will surely be snapped up by a major European Club in the near term.

Across town South have young Vince Lia and Michael Baird as terrific future prospects.

But the revelation of the Victorian

season to date has surely been South Melbourne's patient keeper, Eugene Galekovic who has been outstanding, relegating Dean Anastasiadis to the number two spot.

Youth Promotion

With little fanfare two youth team players have been promoted to senior ranks at South Melbourne.

This week Danny Wright handed the number 21 shirt to Samim Rahim, a terrific young striker who also looks to have an exciting future.

Another striker promoted recently from the youth to senior team at South is Ibrahim Ibraimi. He's made two substitution appearances for South and is highly regarded by the coaching staff at Bob Jane.

South youth policy seems to be yielding healthy dividends, producing players the ilk of Lia, Pace and Murdocca over recent seasons.

Rumors suggest Steven Pace may be loaned to VPL Club Port Melbourne for the winter to enable him to gain valuable first team experience.



Steve Pace: South youngster could be loaned out to VPL club Port Melbourne?

Leaders In Melbourne

Chairman Remo Nogarotto and popular director Paul Afkos joined Victorian soccer officials to watch the

Young Socceroos demolish Fiji at Bob Jane Stadium.

Their attendance was favorably received by Victorian officials in light of previous administrators rarely visiting our state.

Regrettably one interstate media group saw the need to call the officials in the middle of the international fixture in an attempt to sensationalise a minor crowd occurrence from the evening prior rather than highlight the achievement of our young national team.

More Sponsorship

South Melbourne welcomed another new major sponsor to the club this week in BT Lift Trucks.

President Peter Mitrakas welcomed the company to the soccer community at the weekends Presidents Lunch where he revealed the new strip with the distinctive red BT logo on the front of the shirt next to that of major sponsor Laiki Bank.

Other sponsors on the shirt are Crazy Johns, Parthenon Marble and 3AW Southern Cross radio.



Daniel Piorkowski (left) & Vince Lia (right) have both been revelations for both the Melbourne Knights and South Melbourne this season.



NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

After Round 16	TOTAL							PTS	HOME						AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	BYE	F	A		P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A
OLYMPIC SHARKS	15	11	2	2	1	34	17	35	8	7	0	1	16	4	7	4	2	1	18	13
PERTH GLORY	15	11	1	3	1	32	13	34	8	7	0	1	20	6	7	4	1	2	12	7
SOUTH MELBOURNE	14	7	3	4	2	23	19	24	8	6	2	0	19	8	6	1	1	4	4	11
NEWCASTLE UNITED	15	6	4	5	1	24	15	22	7	5	2	0	18	5	8	1	2	5	6	10
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	14	5	3	6	2	24	21	18	7	3	3	1	14	8	7	2	0	5	10	13
PARRAMATTA POWER	14	5	3	6	1	18	18	18	7	3	1	3	10	10	7	2	2	3	8	8
SYDNEY UNITED	15	5	3	7	1	14	21	18	8	5	1	2	10	7	7	0	2	5	4	14
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	15	4	5	6	1	17	21	17	7	2	4	1	6	6	8	2	1	5	11	15
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	14	4	5	5	2	25	31	17	8	4	2	2	16	17	6	0	3	3	9	13
FOOTBALL KINGZ	14	4	4	6	1	17	20	16	6	2	3	1	8	6	8	2	1	5	9	14
BRISBANE STRIKERS	15	4	4	7	1	25	32	16	7	1	1	5	8	18	8	3	3	2	17	16
NORTHERN SPIRIT	12	3	3	6	1	16	26	12	5	1	1	3	5	10	9	2	1	6	8	16
MARCONI STALLIONS	14	3	2	9	1	16	23	11	5	1	1	3	5	10	9	2	1	6	8	16

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 3

(I Fyfe 35', D Pellegrini 15', C Pelosi 11')

MARCONI STALLIONS 0

Referee: Greg Leverton. Crowd: 2,409. Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium.

Cautions: D Pellegrini (ACF) 46', A Vidmar (ACF) 48', N Budin (ACF) 83', A Costanzo (MS) 33', J Spiteri (MS) 81', A Brosque (MS) 44', P Cotte (MS) 83'.

Teams: ADELAIDE CITY FORCE: Scarcella, Fyfe, Kovacevic, Pellegrini, Pantelis, Veart, Vidmar (Kemp 77'), Lozanovski, Terminello (Pellegrini 83'), Pelosi (Turnbridge 85'), Budin.

Subs Not Used: Godley (gk).

MARCONI STALLIONS: Turnbull, Gibson (Cotte 73'), Webb, Costanzo (Anabalon 78'), Longo, Perinich, McDonald, Enes, Spiteri, Brosque, Care (Selaulic 46').

Subs Not Used: Alogdellis (gk).

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 1

(S Lyons 9')

BRISBANE STRIKERS 1

(M McKay 86')

Referee: Craig Zetter. Crowd: 3,008. Venue: WIN Stadium.

Cautions: R Stanton (WW) 46', D Cervinski (WW) 82', S Lyons (WW) 55', B Farah (WW) 72', S Laybutt (BS) 19'.

Teams: WOLLONGONG WOLVES: Crews, Timpano, Stanton (Heffernan 46'), Cervinski, Castro, Wells (Aliffi 69'), Lyons, Young, Sekulovski (Babic 77'), Farah, Mennillo.

Subs Not Used: Whalan (gk).

BRISBANE STRIKERS: Kearn, Stefanutto, McKain, McLaren (McKay 78'), Grierson, Rech (Heath 69'), Webber, Laybutt, Plic, Rose (Carbone 80'), Roche.

Subs Not Used: Baldock (gk).

PLAYER OF THE WEEK



JOHN BUONAVOGLIA (Parramatta Power)

The pint-sized striker grabbed all the plaudits in last week's heavily anticipated match up between league leaders the Olympic Sharks and Parramatta Power.

'Jockey' was everywhere, running for the full ninety-minutes and managed to score two well-taken goals to end the Olympic Sharks seven game winning streak.

The 27-year-old was on target scoring two identical goals to send the Power into the top six for the first time this National League season. Having formed a deadly partnership with Andy Harper at Newcastle United a few years back, Johnny is hoping that his three goals this season will only grow as the Power look set to build on their monumental win against last season's Grand Final winners.

PERTH GLORY 5

(M Horsley 8', S Pryce 11', B Despotovski 23', A Gumprecht 54', 85')

FOOTBALL KINGZ 0

Referee: Matthew Breeze. Crowd: 10,092. Venue: Perth Oval.

Cautions: E Junior (PG) 6', H Ngata (FK) 20', J Taylor (FK) 53'.

Teams: PERTH GLORY: Petkovic, Horsley (Faria 79'), Harnwell, Hassell, Gumprecht, Miller, Despotovski (Mrdja 43'), Byrnes, Junior, Mori, Pryce (Coyne 75').

Subs Not Used: Matassa (gk).

FOOTBALL KINGZ: Utting, Taylor, Atkinson, Perry (Beldham 59'), Jackson, Burton (Turner 46'), Urolovic, Vlahos, Ngata, Miyazawa, Young (Campbell 59').

Subs Not Used: Bannatyne (gk).

NORTHERN SPIRIT 0

NEWCASTLE UNITED 0

Referee: Con Dioni. Crowd: 1,685. Venue: North Sydney Oval.

Teams: NORTHERN SPIRIT: Henderson, Watts, Bell, Spencer, Tobin, Ferguson, Kwasnik (Fisher 67'), Hutchinson, Tomasevic, Wilkinson, Richter.

Subs Not Used: Cartwright, Osman, Acevski (gk).

NEWCASTLE UNITED: Beltrame, Roberts (R Griffiths 50'), Zoricich, Thomas, Bingley, Wilson, J Griffiths, Tsekenis, Baillie, Masi, Egleton.

Subs Not Used: Hughes, Wheelhouse, Willis (gk).

Cautions: I Ferguson (NS), A Wilkinson (NS) 12', N Spencer (NS) 65', P Tsekenis (NU) 33', E Masi (NU) 34', D Beltrame (NU) 48'.

SYDNEY UNITED 0

SOUTH MELBOURNE 1

(V Coveny 51')

Referee: Mark Shield. Crowd: 2,730. Venue: Sydney United SC.

Teams: SYDNEY UNITED: Ivesa, Cacic (Collina 46'), Pavic, Bilokapic, Barrett, Jedinak (Lukac 78'), Mendez, M Santalab, Watkins (Bosnar 84'), Doumanis, Deur.

Subs Not Used: Perosh (gk).

SOUTH MELBOURNE: Galekovic, Durakovic, Liparoti (Iosifidis 36'), Panopoulos, Coveny, Susa (Buljan 82'), Lia, Murocca, Baird (Trimboli 94'), Kisorbo, Damianos.

Subs Not Used: Anastasiadis (gk).

CAUTIONS: G Mendez (SU) 18'.

OLYMPIC SHARKS 1

(A Milicic 20' pen)

PARRAMATTA POWER 2

(J Buonavoglia 30', 81')

Referee: Perry Mur. Crowd: 3,606. Venue: Toyota Park.

Teams: OLYMPIC SHARKS: Bolton, Kohler, Juric, Pondeljak, Milicic (Srihoj 81'), Halpin, North, Parisi, Packer, Durante (Sours 74'), Ishida.

Subs Not Used: Caravella, Hughes (gk).

PARRAMATTA POWER: Reddy, Ceccoli, Orlic, Beauchamp, O'Sullivan, Maloney, Salapasis (Cardozo 89'), Langdon (Sobczyk 60') (Thompson 65'), Zorbas, Buonavoglia, Renaud.

Subs Not Used: Vukovic (gk).

Cautions: T Halpin (OS) 52', A Packer (OS) 74'.

LEADING GOALSCORERS

Name	Club	Total
MORI Damian	Perth Glory	12
GRIFFITHS Joel	Newcastle United	11
PELIKAN Anthony	Melbourne Knights	9
YOUNG Stuart	Wollongong Wolves	9
RECH Fernando	Brisbane Strikers	7
NGATA Heremala	Football Kingz	6
ALMENDRA Patricio	Football Kingz	6
HASSELL Bradley	Perth Glory	6
BROSQUE Alex	Marconi Stallions	6
ROCHE Anthony	Brisbane Strikers	6

BYE - MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

From The Dressing Sheds

By Mark Stavroulakis

-Another year has passed us all and 2003 has dawned a new beginning for Australian soccer.

Having spent the majority of the season arguing politically as to what will happen in the future for the Australian game comes the hope of what gifts are install for the world game here in Australia this new year.

At this point in time it looks as though the Olympic Sharks have pretty much sowed up top spot while second placed Perth Glory also look as though they'll be following Olympic at the top of the table.

The top six will be one tough scenario however with a number of sides vying for a chance cracking a finals finishing.

Let's hope that 2003 is a good one and that soccer as a whole in this country kick's off for the better.

-New Years Eve was certainly a night to remember especially for a few hundred party goers who attended Vieri's restaurant in Cockle Bay, Sydney.

Two special guests made an appearance that certainly shook the restaurant-turned nightclub for that night only.

The Italian duo of Christian Vieri and Gianluca Zambrotta rocked Vieri's restaurant with a surprise appearance much to the delight of the crazed Italian women who had the pleasure of meeting up with the pair that night.

A close source to ABSW stated that the pair were dressed for success and that

they partied all night long. Just goes to show how wonderful and popular new years in Sydney really is.

-Still on the topic of New Years, ABSW's roving eye spotted two Power first graders having a 'big one' at Mobile Home in Sydney's Wharf 3.

The silky striker and the ever determined midfielder were both enjoying a brilliant night that show-cased two of the finest djs in the world - Basement Jaxx and Roger Sanchez.

One being the famous 'Mike Tyson' style punch by Power custodian Liam Reddy that was beamed on the box across Australia. The match was played at a frantic pace but in the end, the result went Olympic's way defeating Nick T's men two-one.

It was a different story last Sunday afternoon at Toyota Park as Nick's men were firing in all cylinders, especially 'Jockey' Buonavoglia who managed to scored both Parramatta's goals in their emphatic two-one victory at Shark Park.

Round 17

10-1-03

Marconi Stallions - Melbourne Knights
Football Kingz - Wollongong Wolves
Newcastle United - Perth Glory

11-1-03

Brisbane Strikers - Olympic Sharks
Parramatta Power - Adelaide City Force

12-1-03

South Melbourne - Northern Spirit

Bye - Sydney United

-The talking point of this week's Round 16 National League matches was the Parramatta Power victory over league leaders the Olympic Sharks.

Refreshing everybody's memory during the end of last year, the pair met at Parramatta Stadium and to this day, the match is still talked about for various reasons.

This was to be Garry Phillips' first loss in seven matches however credit went to the Power boys who battled strongly in a fierce battle that had its fair share of incidents.

It looked like the game would boil over at the start of kick-off when a scuffle broke out between both sets of players due to a reckless challenge, however all order was restored and the game went on.

-Many people doubted during the start of the National League season that the Power had a chance of cracking a top six spot after its disappointing start to the season, but the Round 16 table shows Parramatta in sixth position with eighteen points.

Could we see a dark horse enter the water and cause havoc in the top six? Only time will tell.

-This week the fate of whether the Perth Glory lost three points due to fielding an unregistered player (Andre Gumprecht) in the first round clash against the Power was decided at a Soccer Australia tribunal last Monday.

Due to time deadlines we were unavailable to gain the final verdict however expect a full run down on what happened in next week's ABSW.

If the Power get their way and an extra three points are handed to them, the club move to fifth place just two points shy of third spot.

Also, if the Glory lose the three points, the boys from Cronulla will have their lead extended by four at the top.

Round 18 Fixtures

17-1-03

Adelaide City Force - Brisbane Strikers
Northern Spirit - Sydney United

18-1-03

Perth Glory - South Melbourne

19-1-03

Melbourne Knights - Parramatta Power
Wollongong Wolves - Newcastle United
Olympic Sharks - Football Kingz

Bye - Marconi Stallions

-Rumours circulated Toyota Park last week that a verbal argument broke out between players and coaches after the Sharks loss to the Power.

Although being only speculation, a number of people were shocked to hear what had happened behind Olympic's closed doors?

-ABSW's roving eye has stated that 'Scruffy Murphy's, a nightspot in the city of Sydney has been a popular venue for many Olympic Sharks players. One observer stated that the main attraction to this popular 'water hole' has been a certain bongo player that "performs weekly at the place.

It is none other than the Olympic Sharks physiotherapist Efrem Bunguric.

Keep up the good work Efrem!

-Good to hear that Spirit defender Simon Bell returned to the pitch last week and received the plaudits from players, fans and coach after turning in a wonderful display against Newcastle United.

Bell was under the spotlight during the start of the season after being sent off for manhandling a referee during their clash against Newcastle in Newcastle.



Zoran Matic

It was a different story last Sunday afternoon and from all reports Bell was buzzing and was full of energy - no doubt a great sign for coach Lawrie McKinna.

-It's good to see new Adelaide City Force coach Zoran Matic hit the headlines

for all the right reasons this week after his side destroyed the Stallions three-nil last Friday evening.

In typical Matic style, before the match the Force coach stated to 'The Advertiser' that, "everyone thought they had seen the last of this silly bastard."

In my opinion, silly bastard is not the term Zoran should be using especially after his side's convincing victory over Marconi.

-After spending three



Liam Reddy: Was outstanding for the Power.

months at the Sharks at the start of the NSL season, former Young Socceroo Mark Byrnes decided to part company with Olympic in December after failing to 'hit it off' with last year's Grand Finalists.

The 20-year-old then made the switch to Perth and was in the Glory's starting line-up during last week's match that saw d'Avray's men thump the Kingz five-nil.

From all reports Byrnes had a solid game and the switch could well see him hit top form once again.

-Look to see a few changes in certain National League side's rosters in the next few weeks.

A number of clubs are in negotiations with players as the January transfer window takes its toll.

One such transfer, if going through, will certainly shock a few National League supporters - Stay Tuned for more information on this issue in forthcoming ABSW editions.

Endeavour Sports High Scale English Heights

By Vas Vasilas

Imagine training in one of Europe's most professional and prestigious football training Academy's on a daily routine. Imagine having the opportunity to play against several English sports colleges and proving the high quality of Australian football.

Imagine spending your free time on tours of England's powerhouse stadiums of Anfield and Old Trafford, and a visit to the Museum of Football (Preston). Add a couple of Premier League matches and Worthington Cup clash, and it is undoubtedly a dream tour for any football follower.

For a group of aspiring young footballers, this was unique opportunity to realize the intense and competitive world of a professional footballer. Endeavour Sports High School organized a two-week stint for students in their Football Targeted Sports Program (TSP) at Liverpool F.C.'s The Academy, where Academy coaches gave them an invaluable insight into demands and expectations in the world of football.

Situated in the southern suburbs of Sydney, the Sunderland Shire is undoubtedly one of Australia's largest football nurseries. Endeavour Sports High School has an established and recognized soccer program where expert coaching and development is provided to its students striving for a future career in football.

Endeavour Coach, Debbie Fisher, highlighted the enormous benefits of this inaugural football tour, "While our School's Football Targeted Sports Program has been successful in developing players' abilities, skills and understanding of the game, The Academy provided students with another perspective into daily pressures and demands of being a professional athlete. The Academy's facilities were simply awe-inspiring and our students really excelled in such a positive environment.

"At Endeavour Sports High School, we place great emphasis in the balance of sport and education. When Liverpool legend and The Academy's Director of Youth Development, Steve Heighway, had his lesson with our students, it was fantastic that he reinforced the importance of balancing high performance training with academic studies.

"It was a great learning experience for our students. While they may have the aspirations of pursuing a football career and ultimately moving overseas to the more lucrative European Leagues, the realities of the intense competition for success is a factor that makes itself significantly felt.

"During all our training sessions, the coaching staff continually pointed to the need for focus and concentration, and this reflected the enormous efforts and determination needed in the game."

Throughout the tour, Endeavour S.H.S played several friendly matches against respective English sports colleges. While Endeavour Girls team narrowly went down to the Everton Academy Under 16's, it comfortably recorded 3-0 wins in both matches against Fairfield High School, Widnes.

The Endeavour Boys fought out a well-deserved 1-1 draw against Cardinal Heenan, Liverpool, defeated Fairfield Under 15's 3-0, while being defeated 3-2 in the final moments of match against Wakefield's Under 16's. Endeavour's Boys Captain, James Riosco reflected on his teams great performance, "Considering our unfamiliarity playing on astro-turf and the freezing English weather, I am very proud with our efforts. It was fantastic to see how we gelled together as a team and played good football. We proved to our opposition that Australia is highly competitive as a football nation."

Girl's Captain, Natalie Spirovski, summed up the students' thorough enjoyment of the Tour.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Most of us watch the English Premier League on a weekly basis and for the two weeks, we were living it. Whether we were training at The Academy, watching Premier League matches, touring the stadiums or even shopping football merchandise, everyone enjoyed every moment. Old Trafford may be promoted as 'The Theatre of Dreams', this was 'The Tour of Dreams'.



The entire Endeavour Sports High School squad that toured England.

Crook calls for afternoon NSL ban

Newcastle coach Ian Crook called for afternoon summer matches to be scrapped after his side was held to a 0-0 NSL draw against a gallant Northern Spirit at Brookvale Oval.

"We had a game last week against South Melbourne and we had two or three drinks breaks during the game and it really was boiling hot," said Crook after the players contested a dour draw in searing heat in Sydney.

"I think the most sensible option is to put matches back to 7.30pm. It was tough out there.

"We're not making excuses - both sides didn't hit a great patch in the first half and there were a lot of loose passes - but it (an early start) doesn't help the situation."



Ian Crook: Newcastle United's head coach.

The draw has hauled the Spirit off the bottom of the NSL table, one point ahead of Marconi, while Newcastle (22 points) lost a chance to move closer to nearest rivals Perth Glory (34).

OFF THE CROSSBAR



By Allan Crisp

THIRD TIME LUCKY FOR MATIC AT FORCE?

Return engagements by coaches are becoming common place at the Adelaide City Force soccer club.

Surely City is unique in having two coaches who have had three separate stints at the helm.

When Zoran Matic assumed the caretaker-coaching role following the resignation of Charley Villani he became the second man to double up as coach for a third stint.

Current City president Bob D'Ottavi set the unlikely trend with three turns on the coaching turntable, starting with the 1981/82 season before a brief spell in the 2001/2002 campaign.

D'Ottavi's latest stop gap coaching attempt was a single game effort for the away match against Melbourne Knights, while he was continuing to persuade his business partner Matic to step into the coaching spotlight for the rest of the current season.

Matic reluctantly accepted, but immediately declared that the first four games of the New Year would be crucial to the finals chances of the Force.

Resilient Matic, underlined his reputation as a strict

clubs he coached during his record 448-NSL game sequence.

The pressure of the Matic appointment intensified when Marconi coach Raul Blanco stepped out of the Stallions team bus at Hindmarsh Stadium before the match.

Those with long memories saw the arrival of the former Socceroo and Olyroo coach as a "replay" of the Matic-Blanco rivalry that thrilled crowds when the Matic led Adelaide City locked derby horns with the West Adelaide

capacity and that he just begun to enjoy his new lifestyle, free from training sessions and associated pressures.

"It was good to come home in time for dinner and watch the evening news," Matic said.

"I didn't plan to coach again and if it wasn't Adelaide City I wouldn't have come back."

So, Matic returns to juggle a full on business career with the traumas of coaching a national league club.

There was a time when Matic also was asked to combine those activities with coaching the SA State team.

"How would that be possible?" Matic was asked. "If you want a job done, give that job to a busy man," was his reply.

What does he say to his critics who claim that his methods are old fashioned and that his tactics are defensive?

"Let's just let the results speak for themselves."

COMMON SENSE

Commonsense was the winner when Adelaide City Force opted to remain at Hindmarsh Stadium for the remainder of the NSL season.

Supporters of a proposed

switch to Norwood Oval failed to consider the adverse effect that such a move could have on the game in general.

The cries that a virtually vacant Hindmarsh Stadium would render the stadium a "White Elephant" and a waste of taxpayers money would have resounded throughout the State with renewed vigour.

As it was, an agreement was reached between the State Government, which manages the facility to open only the western grandstand on match nights (Friday nights with 7pm kick-offs) for all home games.

And the major carrot in the deal was the reduction of the match fee from \$8,800 to \$5,330.

The decision to move the City home games from Sunday afternoons to Friday night fixtures during the summer months was made pre-season.

The 7pm kick-off chosen should be an agreeable time slot for families and the younger population who still would have time to socialise in the bars and coffee shops after the matches.

Confining the fans to the western stand is a cost cutting move requiring, as it does, fewer security staff.

However, the Force cheer-

squad, which historically positions itself behind the goals, raised the point that grandstand patrons do not look kindly on trumpet blowing or drum beating in that enclosed area.



A compromise was reached with the cheer-squad being allocated standing areas at both ends of the western stand.

GLANCING BACK

A flashback to the 2002 World Cup finals tells us that the tournament produced the second-lowest number of goals in 20 years and had the lowest crowds since 1982.

Of the past six tournaments, the 2002 2.51 goals-per-game average was only lower in 1990 when it was 2.21.

Crowd average for the series was 42,321 from the 2.7 million fans who went through the stadium turnstiles.

From the jointly hosted tournament, Japanese crowds were more than 5,000 larger on average than those in South Korea.

Which just goes to prove

that statistics fail to reveal the colour, pageantry, zeal and unbridled enthusiasm displayed during the event in both soccer-hungry countries

By any measure, the tournament was a huge success.

Apart from some incredibly inept refereeing performances and some ridiculous Oscar winning-awards by players for faking injuries, World Cup 2002 was a grand advertisement for the game.

The fact that Australians were able to view the tournament in their lounge rooms during prime time was a huge bonus that alerted many unconverted locals to the beauties of the game.

Had the Socceroos been part of the action it could have been all the way up for the game Down Under

The closing chapter of 2002 brought Oceania direct World Cup qualification and the goodies kept coming in the early stages of the New Year with FIFA extending the Confederations Cup beyond 2007.

And, with the World Club Championship set to be revived in 2005, South Melbourne could soon no longer be a Little Orphan Annie.

NSW Police Win First Leg of Charity Cup

The NSW Police representative side scored two goals to nil as they celebrated the defence of the first leg of the annual Charity Cup at Toyota Park. The Cup Game featured as the lead-up match to the Olympic Sharks and Melbourne Knights on 29 December.

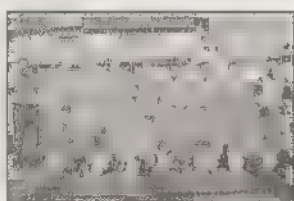
Police midfielder Vlad Kutle broke the deadlock in the 30th minute after connecting with a corner from Martin Lynch. In a physical encounter the Fire Brigade narrowly missed scoring after a goalmouth scramble a few minutes earlier, while the Police keeper former Sydney Olympic keeper, John Karoubas also cleared a strong cross in the 6-yard box.

In the second half the competitiveness continued with each side counter attacking. Former Northern Spirit midfielder Paul Wearne had his first run with the Police and blended in well starting a number of attacking moves. In the 75th minute Justin Hadley, Captain of the Police side, powerfully headed another corner from Martin Lynch, from the front post to secure the two nil win

Superintendent Warren Fletcher, President of the Police Soccer Club, said, "he was pleased with the side performance and seeing a number

of new young players who recently graduated from the Police College playing with the side. Its always an important event to support the Charity Cup and both the Police and Fire Brigade officers do all of this in their own time".

Mr Fletcher said, "We owe a lot of thanks to the Olympic Sharks and Soccer Australia for approving and supporting the Police and Fire Brigade to actually be able to hold this event prior to the National League match of the Australian Champions. We also owe a lot of thanks to the Olympic Sharks Supporters



The victorious NSW Police representative side.

for being so generous and supporting our fundraising efforts on this day with some \$3000 being raised for Police Legacy, Homicide Victim Support Group and the Children's Hospital Burns Unit."

The second leg of the Charity Cup is to be played at another National League Club venue before the end of the current season.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE 2002-2003 NORTHERN DIVISION - ROUND 16

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE 2002-2003 NORTHERN DIVISION RESULTS - ROUND 16

FRIDAY 3 JANUARY 2003

Wollongong Wolves Youth 6 QAS 1
(Martin 26' 32' 51', Majurovski 43', Abel 50', Werakso 70') (Richardson 6')

SUNDAY 5 JANUARY 2003

Sydney United Youth 2 ACTAS 2
(Cindric 15', Markovic 80') (Barisic 29', Cattanaach 54')

Olympic Sharks Youth 2 Parramatta Power Youth 1
(Hilton 13' pen, Haliti 52') (R. Cardozo 17')

Marconi Mustangs 0 Canberra Deakin 2
(Spaleta 54' pen, Pideski 87')

Northern Spirit Youth 1 Newcastle United Youth 2
(Woodruffe 76') (Mitchell 30', Cowburn 67')

BYE - AIS
BYE - Marconi Stallions Youth

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE 2002-2003 NORTHERN DIVISION LEAGUE LADDER - ROUND 15

TEAM	P	W	D	B	L	F	A	Pts	SURNAME
Parramatta Power Youth	14	8	3	2	3	35	19	27	Spaleta
Canberra Deakin	15	7	4	2	4	38	21	25	Pideski
Wollongong Wolves Youth	13	6	4	2	3	31	18	22	Gavaghan
AIS	10	6	3	4	1	16	7	21	De Silva
Newcastle United Youth	14	5	5	2	4	21	19	20	Glavas
Northern Spirit Youth	13	5	4	2	4	13	10	19	Majurovski
Sydney United Youth	13	5	3	2	5	29	20	18	Smits
Olympic Sharks Youth	13	4	5	2	4	15	14	17	Watkins

ACTAS	12	5	2	3	5	20	23	17
QAS	14	4	2	2	8	18	37	14
Marconi Stallions Youth	13	3	4	3	6	15	31	13
Marconi Mustangs	14	0	3	2	11	5	37	3

ROUND 17 FIXTURES NORTHERN DIVISION FRIDAY 10 JANUARY 2003

ACTAS v Northern Spirit Youth
Time: 5.00 pm

Venue: Hawker Oval

Newcastle United Youth v Marconi Mustangs

Time: 5.15 pm

Venue: Energy Australia Stadium

SATURDAY 11 JANUARY 2003

QAS v Olympic Sharks Youth

Time: 4.35 pm

Venue: Ballymore Stadium

SUNDAY 12 JANUARY 2003

Canberra Deakin v Wollongong Wolves Youth

Time: 5.00 pm

Venue: Hawker Oval

Marconi Stallions Youth v AIS

Time: 5.00 pm

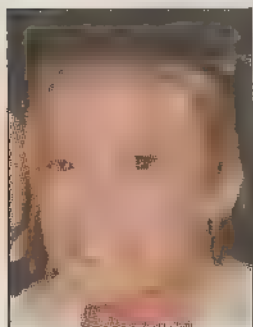
Venue: Marconi Stadium

BYE - Parramatta Power Youth

BYE - Sydney United Youth

FIRST NAME	CLUB	GOALS
Michael	Canberra Deakin	13
Carl	Canberra Deakin	9
Peter	Parramatta Power Youth	8
Timothy	QAS	7
Luka	Sydney United Youth	7
John	Wollongong Wolves Youth	7
Tim	QAS	7
Daniel	Sydney United Youth	7

Vuko Tomasevic: The Rise Of The New 'Spirit'



By Daniela Raco

Northern Spirit returned to the action of the National Soccer League, albeit unsuccessfully, after a three-week hiatus due to the Under 20's Oceania Qualifiers.

Time away from the park has hopefully given this team time to re-group and restore pride in a side that was earlier on in the season touted as being one of the form sides of the competition (maybe they're saving their best till last). Anything is possible.

The game plan is simple...win a few more games and score a few more goals!!!

Spirit mainstay, Vuko Tomasevic realized a dream of playing in Europe after a one year stint in the French Second Division playing for club side Creteil, just outside Paris. It's the golden dream that drives anyone that kicks the round ball in this country. Much to Australia's soccer delight, Vuko returned to our shores ready to take on the challenges of first team football. Vuko, a graduate of the Australian Institute of Sport, is confident his team will find the missing piece of the puzzle and bounce back from their recent form slump.

Over the Christmas break, I sat down with the dead-ball specialist and left-sided midfielder to talk clothing labels, hangover cures, and Beatles music!!

PLAYER'S POSITION - Left-Midfield

NSL CLUB - Northern Spirit.

DR: How would you describe

yourself as a player?

Simple, strong, good technique and good work-rate.

DR: From what age have you been playing this great game?

I started playing when I was five for a local club called Fairfield RSL. I made my first team debut in the National Soccer League on 14 January 1998 playing for Marconi in a game against the Brisbane Strikers.

DR: Will the squad taste Championship glory this season?

We will be competitive. We have a good young side, and realistically anything is possible. We are aiming for the "Top 6".

DR: Vuko how is the team doing on the park?

We have had two of the last ten games postponed, and we are four points away from the top 6. If we win our catch-up games we will be in the top 6. Over the last month we played pretty well.

DR: And off the park?

The boys are very well. The whole squad and coaching staff get on well together. There's a positive morale around the club. We usually have a night out during the week to promote team bonding.

DR: What is your most memorable soccer moment?

Representing the Under 20's Australian team against Uruguay on a tour of South America in 1998.

DR: Can you describe your passion for playing?

It was something that I always wanted to do. I enjoy playing, and it is something I will make a future out of.

DR: Rate your own soccer skills out of 10.



Tomasevic is a big 'Beatles' fan.

8/10.

DR: Is it disappointing to see crowd number dwindling at League clubs, including Spirit?

Yes, because it doesn't create the same atmosphere as it did a couple of years back when crowds were 10,000-15,000. The more emotional the crowd, the more intense the game becomes.

DR: What makes soccer such a popular sport around the world?

The simplicity is the beauty of the game. That's what attracts people.

DR: Is the talent drain harming the local game?

It brings the League down to a lower standard. It's better if a player remains at home for a season or two to improve the League. The better the League, the better the crowds, and the better the sponsorship... and again, creating a better League.

DR: What will it take for Australia to be World Soccer Champions?

The rest of the 200 odd countries to withdraw from the World Cup!!

DR: What league do you rate as the world's best?

The Spanish League, because they play simple soccer. It's fun to watch. They have skillful players and everyone's technique is A-one.

DR: If you could play for any team in the world, which one would it be?

Monaco in the French League.

DR: Is there a soccer player that you model your game on?

I look at a lot of players and what they do, and I try to incorporate different facets into my game. But I love watching Jay Jay Okocha who plays for Bolton Wanderers and Nigeria, because he just takes the piss.

DR: What are the qualities of a good coach?

To have good knowledge of the game, and to be able to pass on that knowledge to his players. To also have a good relationship with his players.

DR: In one word describe Coach Lawrie McKinnna.

The man? Easy going.

The coach? Easy-going.

DR: Who is the funniest character in the game today?

John Hutchinson.

DR: What do you do in your "downtime"?

I like going down to Manly Beach, and I also go to University. I'm studying Exercise and Sport Science.

DR: What is the best (or perhaps worst) excuse you've heard someone use for missing training?

"My car got stolen".

DR: Do you know of any pre-match mishaps (missing players, two left boots, etc)?



Vuko with his sister Ljiljana (left) and mother Dragica (right).

Missing buses to pick up teams - waiting for the bus on the side of the road for two hours.

DR: Any early predictions for season 2002-2003?

In no particular order these teams will make the Top 6.

- Olympic Sharks
- Perth Glory
- Newcastle
- Parramatta Power
- Brisbane Strikers
- and of course, Northern Spirit.

DR: Who is the last person you would like to be stuck in an elevator with?

Ante Dzur, because there would be no conversation.

DR: If you uncorked a genie in a bottle, what would you wish for?

A house in the Mediterranean.

DR: If you could travel back in time, where would you go?

The 1960's. It seemed like a fun, party time to grow up. And, I'm a Beatles fan and enjoy that type of music.

DR: If you could choose any actor to play you in a movie, who would it be?

Clint Eastwood.

DR: What is your favourite late night snack?

Cheese and crackers.

DR: Who would you trade places with for a day?

Jay Jay Okocha.

DR: What is the biggest misconception about sportsmen?

That we're all health freaks - we actually live normal lives.

DR: If you could have any supernatural power, what would it be?

To know what people are thinking.

DR: What is the best ingredient for a good night out?

A good group of friends.

DR: Complete this sentence "Love is..."

Love is happiness.

DR: What is your biggest fear?

A bad night's sleep!

DR: What ring tone do you have on your mobile?

I like simple things - the usual brrring, brrring.

DR: If you were a bird, whose head would you poo on and why?

George Bush.

DR: What is the most expensive item of clothing you own?

Dolce Gabbana jeans.

DR: Can you tell me a joke please?

Two nuts were walking down the street...one was a-salt-ed.

DR: Do you have any bad habits?

I try to be too clean.

DR: Are you the first or last to leave the change rooms after a game?

The last. I take my time. I don't rush. I just sit and relax.

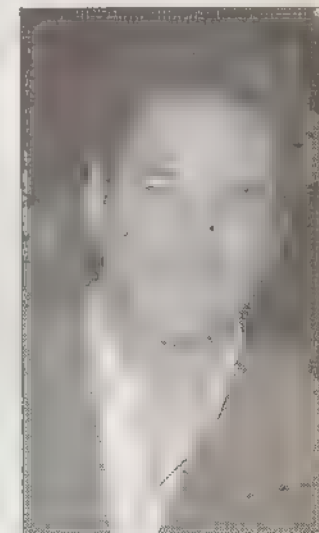
DR: What gets you up in the mornings?

My alarm clock.

DR: What is the first thing you do when you arrive home?

I hit the fridge.

DR: How would you spend your last \$50?



Vuko likened to Superman's Dean Cain.

I'd give it to charity, and then hope it brings

Panel: Vuko, Daniela Raco, Brent Fisher, Dean Cain, and Mark Alar Brown.

Letters to the Editor

WORLD CUP ENTRY BLISS

Dear Sir,

Soccer in Australia may yet survive, with the automatic World Cup qualifying place given to Oceania. In addition, if it does not help Australia, it will certainly help New Zealand, and this, in the end, can only be good for Oceania.

Now is the time to act, and I would like to see the following:

- Australia to play trial games against European countries that are not involved in the day's games for Euro Championship or World Cup qualifiers.
- Our players are overseas based and clubs will release them if there is a break in their domestic league calendar
- Set up an Australia 'A' side to play against Asian countries, made up of NSL players
- A new revamped National League

made up of two divisions of 10 teams, with promotion and relegation. Teams currently in NSL and top State Premier teams invited to participate. Continuous promotion/relegation from State Premier Leagues to be possible, with performance off the field to be taken into account when promoting teams into National League 2 from State Leagues. If a team is not financially viable it should remain in State Leagues.

Teams to expand on their ethnic origins and become more cosmopolitan by inviting members from other ethnic groups. Remember AC Milan was founded by the British

• Our National league teams to become financially viable with TV rights, merchandising, or clubhouses and pokies etc

• Our League champions to be allowed to participate in the Asian Champions League

• Future expansion of the National League into other large centres — e.g. Tasmania, New Zealand South Island, even Papua New Guinea and North Queensland

Maybe then we could have a Soccer League that will compete with AFL and NRL for TV viewing and merchandise. One day Australia against New Zealand in soccer could rival the Rugby Union version. Australia now has the chance to improve their FIFA ranking and upgrade our domestic competition.

Yours faithfully

Terence Moss - Soccer fan
Melbourne VIC

WELL DONE YOUNG SOCCEROOS

Dear Sir,

I want to express the delight of seeing the U20 Young Socceroos progress towards this years World Cup in Dubai.

I had the pleasure of seeing the boys outplay Fiji in Melbourne a few weeks back and was really impressed at the style in which the boys played.

The score-line said it all, the Australians domi-

nated and I can't wait to see them in action against the world's best.

Ange's side in my opinion is one of the best young sides I've seen.

Just wanted to say my appreciation in watching these hopeful Socceroos in action — well done boys you've done your country proud.

Dominic Rigoli,
Footscray, VIC.

SHARK DELIGHT

Dear Sir,

With the new year gone its great to see the Olympic Sharks on top of the NSL ladder and from all indications they look the goods in winning the competition this season.

The side has rarely been troubled by any other team as the club looks set to topple records in regards to their winning streaks.

Gary Phillips has a strong squad full of exciting players

and one thing's for sure, many of them have a huge future in the game of football.

Owens and Porter have gone overseas and I think they'll be more leading the way, it just goes to show how good the club is doing in terms of creating players for overseas.

Well done guys — keep up the good work, your doing the club proud.

John Sfiakis,
Mascot, NSW.



COME ON THE KIWIS

Dear Sir,

I've been rather disgusted lately in seeing so much public-

ity about Australia qualifying for the World Cup well before a ball has been kicked.

The Aussies seem to forget what we did to them last year in getting to the Confederations Cup and one thing's for sure, the side will be doing all they can in gaining that spot to the World Cup.

The good thing about the Kiwis is that regardless if a player is playing abroad they're always wanting to play for their country no matter what.

Go you Kiwis, show them who the real Oceania champion really is

Les White,
Nowra, NSW

AWARITEFE BLUES

Dear Sir,

I would like to express my disappointment about a comment made by Francis Awaritefe on TWG show on SBS last week. In discussing the Mark Bosnich issue, Awaritefe said "I would like to receive \$133,000 a week and be depressed. How can that be?" or words to a very similar effect.

Sadly it shows a complete ignorance of the issue of mental health. By Awaritefe's standards money must equate to happiness. This very shallow and ignorant analysis of mental health is unacceptable on SBS. Depression often has very little to do with money.

SBS, the public broadcaster which espouses high standards, should make Awaritefe publicly apologise to Mark Bosnich and the Bosnich family in Australia for his cheap and unwarranted shot at a wonderful young man who gave everything for the Green and Gold and. at

the moment, may be experiencing some difficulties in his life

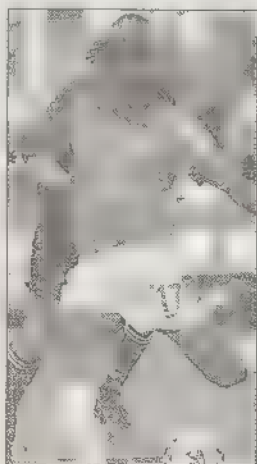
Awaritefe's comment was totally out of line and sadly it was not even his own original idea. He rehashed the nonsense that some ex Chelsea player had made in the English media about a week earlier. Very sensibly Craig Foster, who too seemed stunned for a second

at Awaritefe's comment, correctly pointed out that it had already been said in England and offered an alternative point of view. Host Andrew Orsatti should have stepped in and corrected the situation as well

TWG's panel of experts is the poorer for not having on a regular basis Johnny Warren who is without peer when it comes to soccer analysis and discussion in Australia.

Furthermore, it needs a host who can keep a discussion flowing without checking his notes so often and therefore SBS should consider bringing back Kyle Patterson. At least in the old days of On The Ball, with Kyle and Johnny, it was a far more appealing show where the discussion flowed and the hard questions were asked.

Joe Russo
ABSW's Italian soccer
columnist



Francis Awaritefe

WAKE UP WARREN

Dear Sir,

What was former Socceroo player Johnny Warren thinking when he mentioned to the media a few weeks back that Oceania did not deserve a spot at the next World Cup?

Come on Johnny, you've been a great ambassador to the game here in this country a comment like that was totally uncalled for.

At first I thought that it was a misprint seeing Warren's name printed and speaking about the negative aspects of football

But to my amazement it wasn't and thought that this man above anybody else would set a good example on how good this would be for the game in this code.

I was also disgusted about the amount of expert journalists who slammed this entry as saying it 'was the easy way in' for Oceania.

Soccer is obviously a

threat to many codes here in this country and I guess many of these non-soccer supporters are hoping that no success comes from this wonderful option of gaining a direct sport in Germany in 2006.

Its disheartening that so many people want to see

soccer dead in this country but it is with great virtue that a lot of fans (the real people of the game) know that this sport is number one across the world and will continue to be until the end of time.

Steve Tsonis,
Epping, NSW.



Johnny Warren

THIRD TIME LUCKY FOR ADELAIDE

Dear Sir,

It's good to see coach Zoran Matic back at the helm for the Force last week after some years of wilderness from the game.

Its been no secret that the job of being the Adelaide City Force coach has been a tough task for any coach these past few years but I'm pretty sure Matic will do the club proud in bringing the glory days back to the black & white's.

I feel however saddened

at the fact that ex-coach Charley Villani who stated in the press last week that interference by the board and his

Apparently the current Force board did not see eye to eye with Villani and the coach decided to quit.

I think internal conflicts with the board intervening with the team's selection is ludicrous and should be stopped.

How is the team going to do well when the team selection isn't based on the coaches say but someone else's?

Craig Stevens,
Norwood, Adelaide.



criticism of his training methods were the cause of his departure.

NOW IS THE TIME

Dear Sir,

Its good to see that the offices at ABSW weren't shut during the Christmas as everyone knows that soccer is a all-year event with no rest for the faint hearted

As a keen soccer follower for many years now I was more than happy to have seen and heard all the news of Oceania gaining direct entry towards the World Cup in 2006.

Everything is looking up for the code at the moment. something of a rarity in this game of ours in this country

but let's hope we use all this for a good cause and gain something that has been unachievable since the start of the sport in this country — gaining the status of the number one sporting code in this country

I just hope that the management at Soccer Australia get their acts together in shifting the game towards a new and improved direction.

The only way is up from here

Frank Crisco,
Merrylands, NSW.

ABSW

IMPORTANT NOTICE

SOCCKER

ABSW staff and management hope that all our readers had a great Christmas and a wonderful and safe new year and hope that 2003 will be an even bigger one for everyone.

Next week's issue (January 14) will go back to the normal 32-page content full of Australian and World Footballing news, views and results.



ENGLISH



An English Odyssey

By Stuart Jones

Welcome back to another week of English footy, with this week dominated by the opening of the transfer window, the first time this system has been used in England of course. Mind you with the amount of players being loaned out or in so far this season where is the real difference anyway?

Birmingham City has been busy since the transfer window opened. First there was the signing of defender Ferdinand Coly from Lens and now they have signed French striker Christophe Dugarry until season's end. Dugarry had been playing in France for Bordeaux.

Meanwhile Everton have also made a double swoop with USA striker Brian McBride (who previously played under manager David Moyes at Preston) and Egyptian defender Ibrahim Said signed to loan deals. McBride is around until April when he will return to Columbus Crew whilst Said will have time to impress before Everton have an option to buy him in the summer.

Manchester City has gone to the continent for players as well with Daniel Belmadi set to join the club on loan from Marseille. The Algerian international midfielder has played club football in France and Spain.

In other transfer Stathis Tavlaridis has been loaned out to Portsmouth from Arsenal, whilst Mika Aaritalo has joined Aston Villa from TPS Turku for an undisclosed fee. Liverpool's Daniel Sjölund has been loaned out from Liverpool to Djurgården.

Christmas was not much fun for Spurs fans as they saw their side pick up just one point from nine. Other losers over the festive period were Sunderland and West Brom, neither of whom picked up a point, although for Albion one of their matches was postponed. Fulham and Birmingham only picked up a point but perhaps the most damage was done around Chelsea way as they too only picked up one point putting a major dent in their championship ambitions. West Ham and Liverpool picked up two draws each whilst Everton picked up three draws from their three games. Middlesbrough started well by defeating Man Utd but then managed to lose their next two games. Bolton was the only team to complete a full set of results, with a win, loss, and draw. Like Everton Blackburn went through the period undefeated, although it was only in their last match that they managed a win. Aston Villa, Newcastle and Man Utd all started slowly with a loss but all managed to win their last two games. However the biggest winners were Southampton, Arsenal, Manchester City and Leeds. Soton, the Gunners, and City all gained seven points from a total of nine, whilst Leeds were the only side to win all three of their Christmas games.

The optimism at Carlisle United after the departure of former owner Michael Knighton has certainly waned. The crowds have dropped substantially (they are still the fifth highest in the league but that is thanks to early season numbers), raising questions as to whether Cumbria can maintain even one professional team. It seems a long time ago that they had three, with Carlisle joined by Barrow and Workington. With two teams dropping out of the league for the first time this season Carlisle are languishing near the bottom with just Swansea behind them. Bristol Rovers, Boston and Exeter also all remain in danger, although the Grecians have 2 games in hand and the pirates have one game in hand, as do the Swans. In the conference Yeovil remain favourites to join the football league for the first time whilst former league clubs Chester and Doncaster chase second. Four other teams also remain in the hunt, three former league clubs in Hereford, Scarborough, and Hibernia as well as Morecambe.

In Division Three Hull City is averaging 10809 people at their matches whilst Bristol Rovers despite their poor form come in second with 6751. Compare that to the Premiership figures where Man Utd average over 67500 and Newcastle 51700 and you can see where the great divide is. At the bottom of the Premiership supporters list is Fulham who average just under 17000 people. This compares to nine clubs in division one who average more than Fulham. Leicester averages over 28000 whilst Derby averages over 26000 still. Wimbledon's figures are disastrous with just 2670. That figure only beats Macclesfield who, ranked 24th in Division Three, average 2058. Even Kidderminster average 100+ more spectators.

It looks like Sergei Rebrov may get the move he has been seeking with Fenerbache said to be interested in the Spurs striker. Rebrov was quoted this week as saying "I want to play in a team whose management believes in me. I want to return to the level I used to be at a couple of years ago." With Les Ferdinand possibly moving on soon Spurs striker ranks look quite thin.

Until next week keep loyng the football in the old dail!

Journeyman Shrewsbury forward Nigel Jemson rolled back the years with a virtuoso performance to send Everton crashing out of the FA Cup at Gay Meadow.

With a minute to go and the tie looking destined for a replay at Goodison, the former Nottingham Forest and Sheffield Wednesday man got on the end of Ian Woan's free-kick to head the Third Division side into the draw for round four.

Earlier, Jemson, 33, had cracked home a stunning 25-yard free-kick seven minutes before half time to stun David Moyes' Barclays Premiership high-flyers. But Swedish midfielder Niclas Alexandersson, on as a second-half substitute, got Everton back on level terms when he cut inside to drill the ball home with a low shot on the hour.

However, Jemson - left out of the Nottingham Forest side which reached the 1991 FA Cup final at Wembley - had the final say to leave Shrews' boss Kevin Ratcliffe celebrating a famous win over the side with which he had won so many honours as a player.

Mirror-image Ruud van Nistelrooy penalties proved too much for Portsmouth as Manchester United scrambled into the fourth round at Old Trafford with a 4-1 win.

The £18.5million Dutchman twice stepped up to hit the same corner, sending Shaka Hislop the wrong way on both occasions as Pompey's brave fightback was snuffed out with a late flurry.

Van Nistelrooy's first effort, quickly followed by a David Beckham free-kick, had threatened to sweep the Nationwide League promotion chasers away inside the first 17 minutes.

But Steve Stone's close-range effort set up a dominant second-half display from the visitors.

However, after chances to equalise had gone begging, van Nistelrooy stroked home his 20th goal of the season nine minutes from time before substitute Paul Scholes wrapped up a flattering win with an impish stoppage time chip.

Dennis Bergkamp struck his 100th goal for Arsenal as the FA Cup holders beat Third Division Oxford 2-0 at Highbury. Brentford heaped more misery on beleaguered Derby manager John Gregory with a 1-0 win at Griffin Park.

Stephen Hunt's first-half goal was enough to win the tie, even though the home side had Steve Evans sent off after 72 minutes for his second caution.

Non-league Farnborough pulled off another shock to send Third Division Darlington out at Feethams. Goals from Rocky Baptiste and Danny Carroll (two) put the Nationwide Conference team into round four with a 3-2 win.

Former Scotland boss Craig

Brown endured another poor afternoon at Deepdale as Division Three Rochdale dumped Preston out of the cup. Lee McEvilly (39) and substitute Paul Simpson (54) saw off the First Division side as Iain Anderson's equaliser three minutes into the second half counted for nothing. A first-half hat-trick from transfer-listed Daniele Dichio saw



Luke Rodgers of Shrewsbury Town is challenged by Thomas Gravesen of Everton during the Shrewsbury Town v Everton FA Cup Third Round match.

West Brom through against Bradford at The Hawthorns. Mark Danks (79) grabbed a consolation for the visitors as they were beaten 3-1.

Jonathan Johansson scored twice as Charlton saw off Third Division battlers Exeter 3-1 at The Valley, while West Ham left it late to record their first home win of the season when they came from behind to beat Nottingham Forest 3-2 at Upton Park.

The First Division promotion-chasers were ahead twice through Marlon Harewood and Andy Reid but Jermain Defoe's second goal of the game snatched a precious win for the struggling Hammers after David Johnson missed a penalty.

Matt Jansen got back on the goal trail with a brace to send Blackburn into the fourth round at the expense of Aston Villa. Jansen scored his first goals since recovering from a motorcycle accident in the summer.

Mario Stanic's 39th-minute goal proved enough to send last season's runners-up Chelsea into round four as Middlesbrough were beaten 1-0 at Stamford Bridge.

The game was marred by a second-half goalmouth melee which saw Chelsea keeper Carlo Cudicini red-carded on 64 minutes as Gareth Southgate's effort had been disallowed.

Leeds are also through after avoiding a potentially tricky tie with a 2-0 win at Scunthorpe.

Mark Viduka set Terry Venables' men on their way from the spot on 32 minutes, with Erik Bakke (68) netting the second goal. Perennial Cup battlers Tottenham crashed to a 4-0 defeat at in-form Southampton.

Saints were in charge from the start and took the lead when Spurs keeper Kasey Keller spilled an Anders Svensson and fellow Swede Michael Svensson reacted first to prod the loose ball home.

Glenn Hoddle's side were second best for the rest of the half but went in only 1-0 behind. But within 10 minutes of the re-start, they were on their way out.

Jo Tessem sealed a sweeping move with a low left foot drive into the corner after 50 minutes and five minutes later, Anders Svensson was allowed to wait through a static Spurs defence to fire the third under Keller's body.

Striker James Beattie completed the rout with the fourth, his 14th

THIRD ROUND FA CUP

Manchester U. 4 - 1 Portsmouth
Arsenal 2 - 0 Oxford U.
Aston Villa 1 - 4 Blackburn R.
Blackpool 1 - 2 Crystal Palace
Bolton W. 1 - 1 Sunderland
Bournemouth 0 - 0 Crewe Alexandra
Brentford 1 - 0 Derby County
Cambridge U. 1 - 1 Millwall
Cardiff C. 2 - 2 Coventry C.
Charlton Athletic 3 - 1 Exeter C.
Chelsea 1 - 0 Middlesbrough
Darlington 2 - 3 Farnborough T.
Postp. Gillingham ? - ? Sheffield W.
Grimsby T. 2 - 2 Burnley
Ipswich T. 4 - 0 Morecambe
Leicester C. 2 - 0 Bristol C.
Macclesfield T. 0 - 2 Watford
Plymouth Argyle 2 - 2 Dagenham & R'bridge
Preston North End 1 - 2 Rochdale
Rotherham U. 0 - 3 Wimbledon
Scunthorpe U. 0 - 2 Leeds U.
Sheffield U. 4 - 0 Cheltenham
Shrewsbury T. 2 - 1 Everton
Stoke C. 3 - 0 Wigan Athletic
Walsall 0 - 0 Reading
West Bromwich A. 3 - 1 Bradford C.
West Ham U. 3 - 2 Nottingham F.
Susp. Norwich C. 0 - 0 Brighton & Hove A.
Southampton 4 - 0 Tottenham H.
Manchester C. 0 - 1 Liverpool
Fulham 3 - 1 Birmingham C.
Wolverhampton W. 3 - 2 Newcastle U.

goal of the season, 10 minutes from time to leave Tottenham totally demoralised.

Bolton and Sunderland must do it all again at the Stadium of Light after Kevin Phillips struck on 63 minutes to earn the Black Cats a 1-1 draw. Michael Ricketts had given the home side the lead on 17 minutes. Non-league Morecambe lost 4-0 at Ipswich while another Division One side, Sheffield United, thumped Cheltenham 4-0 at Bramall Lane.

Non-league Dagenham & Redbridge live to fight another day after drawing 2-2 at Plymouth.

Paul Terry (13) and Junior McDougald (67) got the goals for the Conference side, with Ian Stonebridge (44) and Paul Wotton (61) on target for the Pilgrims.

A last-minute goal from substitute Andy Campbell earned Cardiff a 2-2 draw with Coventry at Niman Park.

Lee Mills (27) and a penalty from player/manager Gary McAllister had put the First Division side in charge.

But Robert Earnshaw (76) gave the Bluebirds a life-line and Campbell smashed the ball home from close range in stoppage time to force a replay.

Bournemouth and Crewe drew 0-0 at The Fitness First Stadium, while Steve Claridge's goal on the hour gave Millwall the chance to bring Cambridge to the New Den after Tom Youngs had put the home side in front on 49 minutes.

First Division Grimsby and Burnley must do it all again after sharing four goals at Blundell Park.

The Clarets raced into a two-goal lead through Alan Moore (14) and Paul Weller (18), but Terry Cooke pulled one back from the spot (57) and Darren Mansaram equalised with three minutes left.

Watford won 2-0 at Macclesfield through goals from Heidar Helguson (24) and Jermaine Pennant (61).

Wimbledon beat Rotherham 3-0 at Millmoor, Neil Shipperley (36), Joel McNuff (85) and Lionel Morgan (90) on target for the Dons.

Walsall and Reading drew 0-0, but Stoke are in round four after beating Second Division leaders Wigan 3-0 at the Britannia Stadium. Chris Greenacre scored twice and Chris Iwelumo was also on target.

The tie at Carrow Road between Norwich and Brighton was abandoned at 3.40pm because of a power failure and has been re-arranged for January 14.

The tie between Gillingham and Sheffield Wednesday at Priestfield Stadium was postponed this morning because of a waterlogged pitch. It has been rearranged for January 7.

Danny Murphy lifted the pressure on manager Gerard Houllier with the goal which could put Liverpool's season back on track.

After 10 league games without a victory, and six since any win at all, the pressure was on for the Anfield club at Maine Road in the third round of the FA Cup. However England midfielder Murphy got the winner when he converted a 47th-minute penalty to book his side's place in Monday's fourth round draw.

Wolves edged a brilliant and frantic FA Cup tie to claim the Premiership scalp of Newcastle as the Magpies' defensive frailties were highlighted in embarrassing fashion.

George Ndah struck a close-range, second-half winner for the First Division side after Newcastle had come back from 2-0 down before the interval.

Excellent strikes by Paul Ince and Mark Kennedy had put Wolves in control but they were pegged back by Jermaine Jenas and Alan Shearer's penalty. The First Division side refused to buckle though and Ndah punished Newcastle for more poor defending.

Louis Saha made a dream comeback from injury to score the goal of the game as Fulham thumped Birmingham 3-1 in an exciting FA Cup third-round tie at Loftus Road.

The 27-year-old French striker has been out since September with a hamstring problem but he returned a fortnight ahead of schedule to help the Cottagers - semi-finalists last season - into Monday's fourth-round draw.

Saha span Birmingham captain Jeff Kenna in the 46th minute and fired past a stationary Nico Vaesen for a fine strike, demonstrating the cutting edge absent from Fulham's game for much of November and December.

FIXTURES

SATURDAY 11 JANUARY

Bolton v Fulham
Chelsea v Charlton
Liverpool v Aston Villa
Man City v Leeds
Middlesbrough v Southampton
Sunderland v Blackburn
West Brom v Man Utd
West Ham v Newcastle

SUNDAY 12 JANUARY

Birmingham v Arsenal
Tottenham v Everton

SPANISH PRIMERA LIGA

Málaga twice fought back from a goal down to take a point off league leaders Real Sociedad in a 2-2 draw on Sunday.

The Basque side bagged an early lead thanks to Kahveci Nihat's seventh minute strike but Kiki Musampa hit back in the 19th minute.

Four minutes later Sociedad were ahead again when Dmitri Khokhlov scored, but Dario Silva found the net in the 56th minute to salvage the draw.

Málaga finished the match with 10 men after Marcelo Romero was sent off in the 83rd minute for his second bookable offence, but it made no difference to the result.

Real Madrid cut their lead at the top to just three points after a 4-1 thumping of Valencia at a wet Bernabeu.

Zinedine Zidane was the star of the show making the first goal in the opening half for Ronaldo, scored the second himself and climaxed his performance with wonderful skill to set up Portillo for the fourth in injury time.

Valencia briefly got back into the contest just after the break when Ayala headed home a corner.

The match changed when Valencia striker Aimar was

sent off for two yellow cards and Real took advantage with goals from Zidane and Guti.

Barcelona started the year with a much needed 3-0 win over Recreativo Huelva at the Nou Camp thanks to goals from Fabio Rochemback, Patrick Kluivert and Philip Cocu.

Louis van Gaal's men strode to a comfortable victory against rock-bottom Huelva, who made life difficult for themselves when they had Nelson Zelaya sent off when 2-0 down in the second half.

Atletico Madrid's slump continued as they lost 3-0 to a Real Valladolid side determined to escape the rocks of relegation.

Three second-half goals, two of them from Fernando Sales, gave the home side victory against a Betis team stitched together after injuries and suspensions robbed them of key personnel.

With Brazil ace Denilson suspended and Jesus Capitan, Alfonso Perez and Marcos Assuncao all injured, Betis struggled to recapture their early season form.

Joseba Etxeberria netted a second half double to inspire Athletic Bilbao to an astonishing 4-3 comeback victory over Basque rivals Racing Santander at El Sardinero.

Racing held a 3-1 half-time lead after an impressive display from the home side in the opening 45 minutes saw Pedro Munitis, Francisco Javi Guerrero and Mano Regueiro all on target.

Racing even scored their opponents' first-half strike with Jose Moraton Mora putting the ball into his own net. But it was a different story in the second half.

Ismael Urzaiz led the spirited fightback from Athletic, pulling the score to 3-2 from from the penalty spot in the 52nd minute.

Etxeberria then levelled the match 10 minutes later before clinching victory in a hugely entertaining match with his team's fourth goal just two minutes from time.

Rayo Vallecano moved out of the bottom three thanks to a narrow 1-0 victory away at Osasuna.

Defeat at home to Sevilla a fortnight ago saw them slip back into the drop zone after they had moved clear following impressive wins against Barcelona and Betis, so starting the new year with a win will have brought some welcome relief to coach Fernando Vazquez.

Midfielder Julio Alvarez struck the winner in the 21st minute to clinch the vital three points.

Valladolid 3 - 0 Real Betis, Osasuna 0 - 1 Rayo Vallecano, Racing Santander 3 - 4 Athletic Bilbao, Deportivo La Coruna 3 - 0 Celta de Vigo, Sevilla 3 - 0 Mallorca, Real Sociedad 2 - 2 Malaga, Barcelona 3 - 0 Recreativo Huelva, Deportivo Alaves 2 - 1 Espanyol, Villarreal 4 - 3 Atletico Madrid, Real Madrid 4 - 1 Valencia.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Sociedad	16	10	6	0	31	18	36
Real Madrid	16	9	6	1	36	16	33
D. Coruna	16	8	5	3	23	17	29
Valencia	16	8	4	4	25	12	28
Celta Vigo	16	8	3	5	20	16	27
Real Betis	16	7	5	4	26	19	26
Mallorca	16	7	2	7	21	29	23
Barcelona	16	6	4	6	25	19	22
Atletico Madrid	16	5	6	5	23	21	21
Athletic Bilbao	16	6	3	7	25	31	21
Sevilla	16	5	5	6	15	14	20
Valladolid	16	6	2	8	16	18	20
Racing Santander	16	6	2	8	20	20	20
Malaga	16	4	7	5	22	24	19
CD Alaves	16	5	4	7	19	26	19
Villarreal	16	4	6	6	18	21	18
Rayo Vallecano	16	5	3	8	17	23	18
Osasuna	16	5	3	8	17	22	18
Espanyol	16	4	1	11	16	28	13
Recreativo Huelva	16	2	3	11	13	34	9

Next Fixtures, Jan 12, 2003

Athletic v Villarreal
At. Madrid v Deportivo
Celta v R. Madrid
Espanyol v Racing
Osasuna v Valladolid
R. Vallecano v Mallorca
Valencia v R. Sociedad
Malaga v Barcelona
Rec de Huelva v Sevilla
Betis v Alaves

ETHNIKI KATIGORIA

Olympiakos started the new year with an unconvincing 2-1 win over lowly Giannina but remain top of the Ethniki Katigoria heading into the second half of the season.

The reigning Greek champions are bidding to lift their seventh consecutive title, but they will have to play considerably better when they take on arch rivals Panathinaikos in next week's big derby clash.

Yugoslavia midfielder Predrag Djordjevic put Olympiakos ahead in the 29th minute from the penalty spot after he was fouled by Enk Krzisnik following a neat one-two with Stelios Giannakopoulos.

Defender Paraskevis Antzas made it 2-0 in the 51st minute with a close range effort but the hosts

were made to sweat when Thanassis Kostulas put the ball past his own goalkeeper to put Giannina back in the match.

Panathinaikos leapfrogged PAOK Salonika, who lost 2-0 to Panionios on Saturday, and moved up to second thanks to a comfortable 2-0 win at OFI Crete.

Greece midfielder Giorgos Karagounis netted both goals for Sergio Markarian's side, who remain three points behind the leaders.

AEK Athens stay in fourth after picking up a valuable point with a 1-1 draw at fifth-placed Aris Salonika.

Aris took a 17th-minute lead through Nyren Demba but that strike was cancelled out just three minutes later by Kostas Katsouranis.

Xanthi extended their unbeaten run to nine matches after claiming a 1-0 victory at Kallithea thanks to Stavros Labriakos' late goal.

Basement club Panachaiki failed to hold on to a 1-0 lead for what would have been only their second win of the season as Proodeftiki fought back to earn a 1-1 draw.

Kostas Stefanis gave the home side the lead on the hour mark but Kostas Mangos netted from the penalty spot 18 minutes from time to seal a point for the visitors.

Elsewhere, Egen Gerard's first match as Iraklis coach ended in a astonishing 3-2

win over Ionikos.

Ionikos went 2-0 up inside 17 minutes through midfielder Oliver Makor.

But the hosts pulled level thanks to an Edwin Murati free-kick on 29 minutes and Giorgos Xenidis' header on the stroke of half-time from a Takis Gonias corner.

Polish striker Marcin Mroczek headed home what proved to be the winner four minutes after half-time.

PAOK Salonika missed the chance to go top of the table on Saturday night after losing 2-0 at Panionios in their first match of 2003.

PAOK surprisingly emerged as title challengers in the first half of the season after going into the winter break only two points adrift of league leaders Olympiakos.

However, they came unstuck with a disappointing display here.

After a poor first half, the home side went ahead in the 46th minute when Ermin Siljak headed home a cross from defender Tassos Ferekidis.

Turkish midfielder Erol Bulut doubled the score

in the 66th minute with a great shot from 20 yards.

Cypriot striker Yiannakis Okkas had a chance to pull a goal back just a minute later but headed over from a good position.

The win boosts Panionios' hopes for a UEFA Cup place as they are now in fifth place, three points behind PAOK.

Elsewhere, Akratitos slumped to their ninth defeat in 13 matches after Aegaleo ran out 1-0 winners at the Ethniko Stadio Ano Liosion thanks to Theo Angos' solitary goal.

Angos headed home after a corner from Abraham Simeonidis.

Panionios 2 - 0 PAOK Salonika, Akratitos 0 - 1 Egaleo Athens, Kallithea 0 - 1 Xanthi Skoda, Panachaiki Patras 1 - 1 Proodeftiki, Iraklis Saloniki 3 - 2 Ionikos Nika, Olympiakos Piraeus 2 - 1 Giannina, Aris Saloniki 1 - 1 AEK Athens, OFI Crete 0 - 2 Panathinaikos.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Olympiakos	12	7	5	0	28	4	26
2 PAOK	13	7	3	3	30	18	24
3 Panathinaikos	12	7	2	3	23	8	23
4 AEK	12	6	3	3	19	12	21
5 Aris	12	6	3	3	15	12	21
6 Panionios	13	6	3	4	15	10	21
7 Proodeftiki	2	5	5	2	15	10	20
8 Xanthi	12	4	7	1	15	6	19
9 Iraklis	12	5	3	4	13	11	18
0 Egaleo	13	3	7	3	10	1	16
11 OFI	12	2	6	4	11	13	12
2 Kallithea	12	2	5	5	0	14	11
13 Ionikos	12	2	4	6	6	20	10
4 Giannina	12	1	5	6	10	16	8
15 Akratitos	13	2	2	9	9	26	8
16 Panachaiki	12	1	1	10	4	30	4

NEXT FIXTURES January 12, 2003

Panathinaikos v Olympiakos
Kallithea v Iraklis
Ionikos v Aris
Xanthi v OFI
AEK v Panachaiki
Proodeftiki v Panionios
Giannina v Akratitos
PAOK v Aigaleo

Stelios Giannakopoulos starred in Olympiakos' 2-1 victory over Giannina.



SOCCER NSW



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NSW PREMIER LEAGUE SEASON 2002/2003

MATCH OF THE ROUND

Blacktown City Demons	1
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	3

By Paul Goodwin

A depleted A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt shook off the loss of three players in the first half and the absence through suspension of skipper and former Demon, Damon Langan, to record one of the best wins of coach Les De Celis term in charge at Lambert Park.

Bouncing back from a torrid first half,

in which Blacktown squandered many gilt-edged chances, A.P.I.A. showed all their customary second half burst of form to win in convincing style 3-1 at The Gabbie. Jeremy Brown limped off with a bad injury and Joe Moric only lasted until half time, while Tony Tesoro copped a bad knock, as well as missing much of the first half as well.

Michael Galluzzo came on and now seems set for a permanent return, having shaken off the injury blues.

Paul Dee, in the absence of Langan, was the only recent former Blacktown player in the ranks, but he showed enough delight for the pair of them in the after-game dressing-room celebrations.

Make no mistake, this was a vital win for A.P.I.A., leaving Blacktown well adrift and the visitors cruising along at the top.

The game began well for Blacktown with the home side well on top early and every inch looking likely winners.

A combination of poor finishing and some superb goalkeeping from veteran Bob Catlin, allied to stout reading of the game by sweeper Andrew Clark, conspired to prevent the Demons making their domination count.

Quality saves by the big man from David Reid, Kain Rastall and Luke Roodenburg all ensured that the virtual one-way traffic was not reflected on the score-sheet.

In the 37th when Roodenburg won the ball brilliantly near to goal and squared the ball to Reid, the attacking midfielder clipped his shot over the bar, sparing the blushes of the travelling team.

Shots from Jimmy Nikas in the 40th and another brilliant one from Rastall were both saved by Catlin as the first half came to a close.

The gripping contest between two of the big guns of the Premier League did not let up in intensity after the break, but this time A.P.I.A. was able to gain the ascendancy.

A sweeping move by A.P.I.A. in the 55th minute led to Ante Moric getting on the end of a ball tucked back to him at the far post where he arrived 15 yards out to clip the ball into the top corner of the net.

On the hour mark and with Blacktown still recovering from the setback of unexpectedly going behind, Apia found themselves two goals up.

Paul Dee and Zlatko Arambasic, himself a former Demon, many seasons back, got the better of the defence as Dione Valle made desperate attempts to clear his lines.

Valle had a couple of stabs at it, but in the end the ball came back off Valle and past his own keeper, as the two Tigers tussled with him for the loose ball in the box.

Arambasic capped a fine performance



Paul Dee relished playing against his former club.

and emphasized his value to his new side, after a transfer from Sydney United in the off season, with a superb strike.

He turned brilliantly with defenders around him and smashed his shot past John Crawley in skilful fashion.

The Demons got one back towards the end via a free kick awarded 30 yards out from goal.

Simon Catanzaro bent the ball around the wall in the 77th to finally put one past a nigh invincible Catlin and narrow the deficit, but it was too late to inspire a fight back that might lead to the snatching of a point.

Blacktown had Roodenburg again looking sharp and Rastall well to the fore, as he has been all season.

A.P.I.A. were well served by Catlin, by the under-rated Clark and by Sam La Rocca, while the finishing skills of Arambasic were again highlighted and Dee was always prominent against his old club.

Tigers coach Les De Celis felt after the game that Dee has never played better than he is playing now and it is players like this who could figure in a first title for the Leichhardt based club this season.



Bob Catlin put in a vintage performances for the Tigers.

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS1

(S Catanzaro 77')

A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT TIGERS3

(A Moric 54', own goal 60', Z Arambasic 76')

at Gabbie Stadium, Blacktown

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS: 1 John Crawley (C), 5 Ben Willard, 8 Dione Valle, 15 Patrick Galt, 12 Dane Hokin (13 Steve Riches 65), 6 David Reid, 7 Simon Catanzaro (33 Brian Vanega 30), 9 Kain Rastall, 11 Jim Nikas (24 Bishara Stephan 65) 10 Naoki Imaiya, 4 Luke Roodenburg
Subs not used: 22 Paul Karbon, 20 Nik Jelcic (RGK)
Coach: Brian Brown

A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT TIGERS: 1 Bob Catlin, 19 Andrew Clark, 16 Tony Tesoro (5 Michael Galluzzo 29), 17 Paul Dee, 3 Josip Moric, 5 Marous Stergiopoulos (C), 18 Ante Moric (14 John Paul Boutros 45), 12 Jeremy Brown (11 Ryan Jones 60) 7 Sam La Rocca, 9 Zlatko Arambasic, 10 Steve Karavatakos
Subs not used: 20 Murray Nelson (RGK)
Yellow Cards: Blacktown City Kain Rastall 7; A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt: John-Paul Boutros 73

Coach: Les De Celis

Referee: Vic Gauri

Assistant Referee: Michael Johnson and David Bradshaw

Fourth Official: Jim Nicolaou

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SOCCER NSW



Central Coast Coasties 2 Belconnen Blue Devils 1

By Greg Stock

The Coasties reign at the top of the Premier League table will continue for yet another week after they posted a 2-1 win over Belconnen at Plum Park on Saturday night.

With a bumper holiday crowd in attendance, the Coasties stuck to their game plan of scoring first and holding on and that is exactly the way the match panned out.

With Belconnen forced to rest Kemp and Arranz with leg injuries, the reshuffled line-up struggled to click in the first half, conceding two goals to a fired up home side who clearly dominated the final twenty minutes of the half. Central Coast Midfielder Tom Quilty laid on a beautiful pass in the 33rd minute for Josh Maguire to slip in behind the defence and bury his shot into the bottom right hand corner. Eight minutes later in was 2-0 when the reinvigorated Nathan Byrn put

in a pin point cross to the back post, to find Quilty who nodded the ball back to James Monie for him to slot away from a mere nine metres out.

With the halftime words of coach Lino Fiorese ringing in their ears, the Blue Devils played a much more controlled second half, mounting some good pressure which kept the game in the balance right up until the final minute.

Coasties goalkeeper Ben Kern was kept busy denying a Daniel Macor strike direct from a corner just after the resumption before Clinton Larfield smashed home his shot in the 62nd minute after a cross from the left hand side by Lee Pietrukowski.

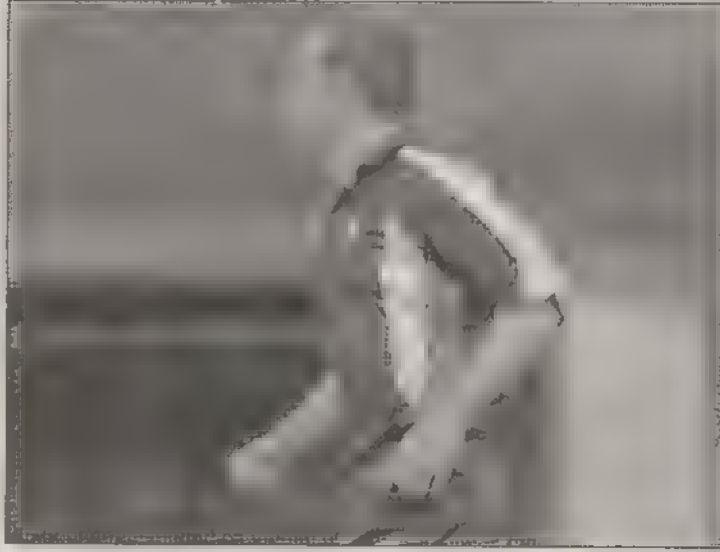
With a number of second half substitutions, the home side held on despite Daniel Macor and Daniel Camara missing late efforts for an equaliser.

Best served by David Brewer, Josh Maguire and Pat Bradley, the win leaves the Coasties unbeaten run intact and guarantees

them top spot for another week ahead of the marquee clash against A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt next Sunday at Lambert. For Belconnen, an indifferent first half clearly cost them any hope in a game which leaves them struggling

with just six points from six matches. With the visit of Rockdale City next

Saturday night, they will really need to improve their consistency if they are to make an impression on the ladder.



David Brewer served the Coasties well yet again.

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES 2
(J Maguire 33', J Monie 41')
BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS 1
(C Larfield 62')
at Plum Park, Lisarow

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES: Ben Kern, Joshua Maguire, David Brewer, Aaron Binskin, Daniel Surridge (Mark Falzon), Tom Quilty (Peter Haynes), James Monie, Chris Fleming, Pat Bradley, Nathan Byrn (Liam Cameron), Sean Matthews.
Coach: John McLafferty

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS: Tony Gannasca, Andrew Downing, Lee Pietrukowski, Jamie Mauro, Michael Katz, Eliot Zwanjaban (valer), Clinton Larfield, Daniel Macor, Galeon, Stewart Camara, Marko Perovic (Daniel Camara), Andy Rasic

Yellow Cards: Coasties: Maguire, Fleming, Belconnen: Downing, Perovic, D Camara
Referee: Nick Asargiotis
Assistant Referees: Warren Jacobs, David Moore
Fourth Official: Peter Gibbs

Bonnyrigg White Eagles 3 Bankstown City Lions 1

By Paul Goodwin

Bonnyrigg were back to their best in beating Bankstown on Saturday on a cool evening at the Serbian Centre.

The manner of their 3-1 win was convincing and gave the impression that their early season stutters may be behind them now.

The injection of loan signing Aaron Burgess into the attack had an immediate impact with the will-o-the-wisp former Northern Spirit striker nabbing a goal for his new club after only 17 minutes to wipe out a goal six minutes earlier by the visitors.

Devrim Huseyin had done some good work on the right and delivered the ball to the near post where Burgess swooped like a true White Eagle to beat the stunned Brad Swancott with the sharpest of finishes.

It was a very smart goal and set up the

home side for a very solid result.

Bankstown had begun emphatically with a goal in the 11th minute.

Ex-Bonnyrigg star-striker Colin Luff tucked the ball away after Ralph Boves free kick had been only partially cleared and it needed all the big mans predatory instincts at a very tight angle to force the ball over the line when at first it looked as if the defence had averted the danger.

The scores were locked at 1-1 at the break, but Bonnyrigg had done most of the attacking, much of it down the right flank where the Lions left plenty of open space.

Burgess almost made it two for the home side in the 48th but a superb point blank save from Swancott denied him.

Bonnyrigg extended their lead in the 64th, however, when Huseyin, again on the right and this time benefitting from a nice ball on from Kindness Agwu, sent a cross goalwards, where Lions defender Alex Trpovski inadvertently wrong-footed the

keeper to put his own side 2-1 down.

Bankstown fought on and Luff continued to probe for openings but it was Bonnyrigg that got the goal that sealed the game for good in the 81st.

Burgess accepted a ball from deep and ran at the defence before finishing past the advancing keeper with a low shot that cannoned off both uprights before crossing the line.

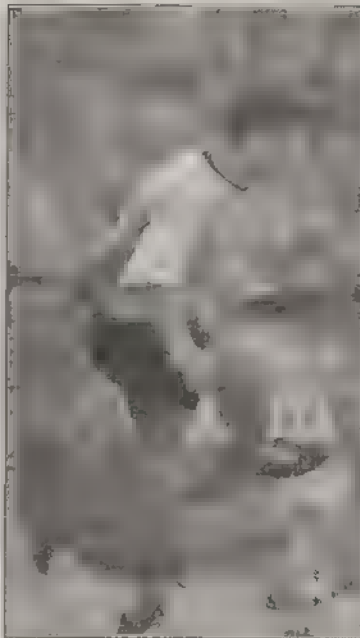
It was a dream debut by the lively Burgess who settled into his new side with minimal fuss.

A word, too, about 17 year old defender Milorad Simonovic making his own first team debut after coming rapidly through the ranks. The wiry youngster never put a foot wrong all night.

Ljube Jancev was jubilant after the win and promised another signing soon, again a striker, to put away the chances created by the likes of Javier Mancino, Dave Harding and Shane Knight.

Beaten Bankstown coach George Fernandez surveyed the scene at the end, one of minor carnage.

"We were not fit, we were beaten for pace and it is obvious we still have a lot of work to do. I am a great believer, though, that Rome was not built in a day."



Robbie Gomez receiving a sliding tackle by his former team mate Tayfun Devrimol.

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES
(B Burgess 17/81', D Huseyin 65')
BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS 1
(C Luff 12')
at Serbian Centre, Bonnyrigg

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES: 1 Fernando Greco, Mark DAlessandro (15 Askin Oygun 81), 18 Fernando Pellegrino, 6 Milorad Simonovic, 5 Tayfun Devrimol (C), 23 Devrim Huseyin, 7 Javier Mancino, 8 David Harding, 9 Shane Knight, 10 Kindness Agwu (11 Joe Bruni 81), 21 Aaron Burgess (13 Brendan Mitrovich 90)

Subs not used: Alex Augusto (RGK) 17, Aleksander Asanovic
Coach: Ljube Jancev

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS: 22 Bradley Swancott, Damien L. Ksu (17 Chris Bradley 51), 8 Glenn Moore, 7 Richard Ljksic (C) 11 Rod Madigan, 6 Raphael Bove (19 Daki Falcon 67), 7 Norman Tome, 12 Robert Issa 51, George Issa, 9 Colin Luff, 13 Robert Gomez, 15 Alex Trpovski

Subs not used: 1 Zlatko Josevski (RGK) 2, Todd McManus
Coach: George Fernandez
Referee: Wayne Crabt
Assistant Referees: Ken Sharp and Daniel Dewhurst
Fourth Official: Brendon Skinner
Yellow Cards: Bonnyrigg: Tayfun Devrimol, 50 Bankstown: Damien L. Ksu 51

Rockdale City Suns 2 Fairfield Bulls 1

By Greg Stock

Rockdale City Suns continued their rapid rise up the premiership table posting a hardfought 2-1 win over the visiting Bulls on Saturday night. It wasn't one of their best wins but in the overall context of a very tough season, they'll take the points anyway they can.

With midfielder Denis Altovic in red hot form, the Suns had plenty of go forward as he had a hand in both goals and generally tormented the Bulls midfield at will.

The first goal from Todorovski was quite simply like a training drill which was started by Altovic on his own side of halfway and involved eight different players in the build up. Splitting the defence with a switch of play to the right hand side, Steven Dimitrovski was able to get in behind the defence and knock in a well timed cross to the rampaging Todorovski who buried his

drive from the edge of the six yard box like an express train. Ten minutes later, the Suns were comfortable at 2-0 with Spase Najdoski taking his first time shot after an Altovic header was merely parried by goalkeeper Darren Moore to the feet of the veteran striker.

But to their credit the visitors didn't give in, coach Craig Sharpley switching defender Jason Connolly up front and firing up his side from the coaches bench. While they did respond via a late effort from Hoenselaars, a lack of composure in front of goals cost them any opportunity of mounting any real pressure.

Their defence, which had been one of their sore points, responded to the challenge and looked more composed with Jason Connolly playing a strong game, but against the hard running Altovic, they just didn't have the answers and will rue some ordinary marking which allowed him so much space.

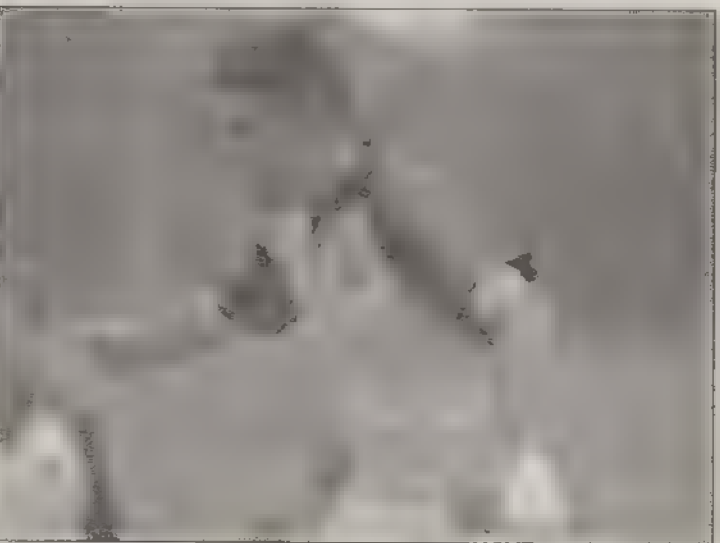
For the victors, Richard Plesa and

Malcolm Bideau were the two defenders who really caught the eye. The contribution of Tony Ju was also a highlight where he ran Stewart Van Bentum ragged down the left hand touchline.

For the Bulls, the contributions of Luke

Tomich and Glenn Sprod off the bench was a highlight.

In a perfect world both would be automatic starters with work commitments keeping both players contributions for the club to a minimum.



Spase Najdoski bagged another goal for the Rockdale City Suns.

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS 2
(R Todorovski 57', S Najdoski 67')
FAIRFIELD BULLS 1
(M Hoenselaars 92')
at John Crehan Park, Cringilla

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS: Peter Trajceviski, Ghenadie Costiuc, Richard Plesa, Malcolm Bideau, David Brickell, Spase Najdoski, Robert Todorovski, Tony Ju, Ben Deighan, Steven Dimitrovski (Peter Apoleviski), Denis Altovic
Coaches: Bil Plovski and - Mile Todorovski

FAIRFIELD BULLS: Darren Moore, Ismael Arrarte, Seler Yildiz, Arthur Diles, Adam Snyder, Jason Connolly, Stewart Van Bentum (Mitchell Daley), Adam Peatey (Glenn Sprod), Robert Angievski (Luke Tomich), Marc Hoenselaars, Mathew Borg
Coach: Craig Sharpley

Referee: Mark Heston
Fourth Official: Harry Breeze

SOCCER NSW

C/bury-M/ville Olympic Penrith Panthers

By Paul Goodwin

Honours and the points were shared at Henson Park on Sunday when a typically determined Penrith Panthers managed to salvage a 1-1 draw out of a game against Canterbury-Marrickville that they rarely looked capable of winning at any stage.

Late arrival Andy Amegashie was disciplined and left out of the Berries side, but the team eventually selected did the job in fine style.

The Berries looked the part for all of the first half and much of the second, but tended to allow Penrith a little too much room towards the end, as they sought to put the game beyond the reach of the visitors with some aggressive attacking.

Canterbury forged ahead in the 6th minute when a free kick from John Kyriazopoulos deep on the right was headed

past Chad Taylor firmly by Sasha Ujtesenovic, as Allan Picken peeled away in a decoy movement that had the Panthers defenders in a flurry.

Canterbury continued to dominate and Michael O'Riley saw a powerful shot beaten away by the keeper a minute later and further chances fell the way of the home side which were not taken, though Picken was always there to lay on decent flicks and passes that should really have been accepted during that busy spell.

The last of many such opportunities in the first period fell to Aheleas Kotsopoulos in the 27th minute and this time it needed a tremendous one-handed save from Taylor to keep the effort out.

Three minutes after the resumption Ujtesenovic almost repeated his first half feat when he headed a corner from the right by John Kyriazopoulos against the crossbar with much force.

Penrith began to look more menacing in

the last twenty minutes and Jason Sciberras, who had been well contained to that point, began to make an impact.

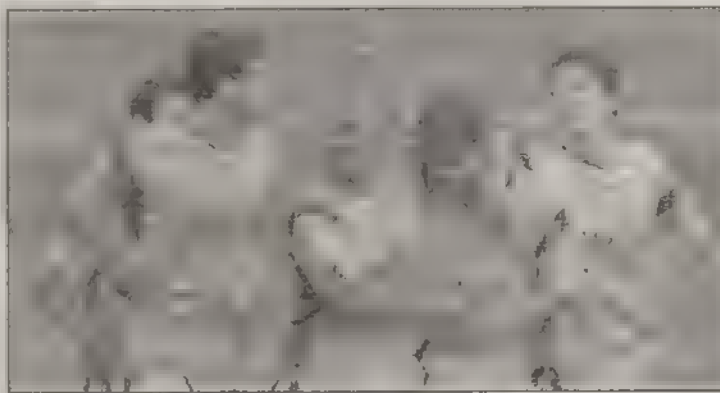
Headers he had were on target but were deflected away for corners in succession and Canterbury suddenly found themselves under assault.

From out of nowhere they fashioned an equaliser. Guilty of ball watching, perhaps, Canterbury allowed Daniel McCann space in front of goal, 30 yards out, where he received a simple pass from Osvaldo El Ali

and then found the centre of the net with an absolute screamer.

Berries substitute Leigh Gunn and mid-field dynamo Con Paradis brought out the best in Taylor for two point-blank saves in the last few minutes, before Sciberras arrived a fraction too late to turn in a nice near-post ball from McCann one minute from the end.

It was a well-earned point for Penrith and probably two more dropped by the Berries, if the truth be told.



Berries celebrates Sasha Ujtesenovic's goal in the sixth minute.

C/BURY-M/VILLE OLYMPIC .1
(S Ujtesenovic 6')
PENRITH PANTHERS1
(L O'Connell 75')
at Henson Park, Marrickville

CANTERBURY-MARRICKVILLE OLYMPIC: 1 van Naeve 2 Sasha Ujtesenovic 4 Cormack Begley 16 Ben Price 12 (Tom Marc 70, George Nohra, 6 Paul Bourke 10 Allan Picken, C), 18 John Kyriazopoulos, 15 Michael O'Riley, 7 Con Paradis 8 Shane Ceverin 86) 11 Aheleas Kotsopoulos (9 Leigh Gunn 73)
Subs not used 20 Tristan Tulloch (RGK), 17 Frank Pezzari
Coach: Greg Woodhouse
PENRITH PANTHERS: 1 Chad Taylor, 26 Marty McCaffery 27 Garrett Dowling 60), 7 David Gardiner 6 Danie Welis, 17 Daniel McCann 21 Luke Boyd (20 Osvaldo El Ali 73) 11 Luke O'Connell, 13 Jason Sciberras 35 Tim O'Connell 19 Danny Hinton, 9 Rod Hutchinson
Subs not used 24 Kurt van Arkeis RGK 14 Cao and Lima 15 Chad Lewis
Coach: Tony Rasmussen
Referee: Peter Jirkovsk
Assistant Referees: Sandro Pertacanni and Aneia Morris
Fourth Official: Gerard Parsons
Yellow Cards: Canterbury v Marrickville: Cormack Begley 39, Penrith Panthers: Luke O'Connell 68

Parramatta Eagles St George Saints

By Greg Stock

Eagles coach John Calleja has his prayers for a goalscorer answered in the unlikely form of a little known player from his under 19 side.

Nathan Rivera, a former Marconi junior, celebrated his debut game in the Premier League with two goals, laying the foundations for his sides 4-0 win at home in a lively encounter against St. George.

Under pressure for his side to recapture their championship winning form of last season, coach John Calleja took the biggest gamble of his coaching career in promoting Rivera, but was rewarded with one of the best debut matches seen in this league for years.

Scoring his first goal after just fifteen minutes and scoring a wonderful solo effort midway through the second half, he showed

enough to suggest he can handle the step up in class. His combination with the enigmatic Daniel Kukucka was a highlight, with the former Power forward sparked into having his best game all year.

Together they reaped havoc, scoring two goals in five minutes midway through the second half to put the match beyond the reach of a Saints side that struggled to cope.

Not that the visitors were outplayed, far from it, more a lack of finish in their front third which told their story. Their night was aptly summed up by Jason Lal, who at 1-0 down missed a one on one opportunity with Eagles goalkeeper Jason Holmes in the 52nd minute.

The ball moving quickly from Holmes's hands straight into attack from where Kukucka was able to score his sides second goal.

One alarming moment for St. George was the neck injury sustained by midfielder Ali



Ben Delicata scored a late goal for the Eagles.

Salim. Ten minutes into the second half Salim was felled in a rather straight forward looking challenge, but was unable to find his feet, complaining of neck problems.

Referee Craig Pearce taking no chances, ordering the match to be stopped for ten minutes while Salim was stretched carefully from the ground and transported to hospital. His condition still unknown at this stage.

Coach Manny Spanoudakis did give an opportunity to former Soccerroo Abbas Saad for the final twenty minutes and he did have some nice touches. If he can get himself fit over the next few weeks his inclusion might just be the tonic the Saints need to lift themselves from the wrong end of the premiership table.

PARRAMATTA EAGLES4
(N Rivera 15', 57', D Kukucka 52, B Delicata 90')
ST GEORGE SAINTS0
at Melita Stadium, South Granville

PARRAMATTA EAGLES: Jason Holmes, Michael Kladis, Paul O'Grady, Mark Reveley, Ben Delicata, Anthony Mittiga (Tim Gledhill), Malcolm Mewak, Matthew O'Shea, Daniel Kukucka (Daniel Borg), Mauricio Isles (Brett Townsley-Jones), Nathan Rivera
Coach: John Calleja

ST. GEORGE SAINTS: Michael Xuereb, Sebastian Sinozic, Luke McDougall (A Chahne), Jose Mendes, Simon Verrender, Archileas Markopoulos, Ali Salim, Abbas Saad, Bruce Beddon, Jason Lal (Max Severas, Evangelos Petratos, George Magis)
Coach: Manny Spanoudakis

Referee: Craig Pearce
Assistant Referees: Jim Barnes & Peter Verrender
Fourth Official: Ernie Horvath

FROM THE SIDELINES By Greg Stock

After the Christmas break the Premier League season resumed with a vengeance last weekend, with more of the same on offer. The high flying Coasties continued on their winning way claiming another high profile scalp in the form of Belconnen, while Rockdale's spot in the top five is safe after they finished off Fairfield. With Blacktown City falling foul of A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt and Bankstown City posting yet another loss, the table is starting to divide into the main contenders and the also rans.

*Our condolences to the family of the late great Jimmy Osborne who passed away on December 27th aged 94. A former Soccerroo from the 1930's Gentleman Jim, as he was affectionally known was the oldest living former Australian international and will be

sorely missed.

Ex Soccerroo captain and coach Joe Marston remembered Osborne well, making his representative debut for NSW alongside the left half in 1945. "When I was coming up as a youngster it was players like Jim I would look up to," said Marston. "He had a tremendous left foot and would lead by example, always giving one hundred percent."

*New signing Aaron Burgess made a fine debut for Bonnyrigg against Bankstown City on Saturday night. Coach Ljube Jancev promises more signings in the next few weeks with another striker being earmarked. Jancev had his eye on Burgess

for a few weeks now and he was signed just after the previous Friday's under 19 game by Northern Spirit.

In other club news, defender Bobby Dragas has joined team mate Freddy

Jancev this week to advise how his trials with Rapid Austria are progressing and when or if he will be back in Australia. Bonnyrigg fans looking for some midweek should venture out to the Serbian Centre on Wednesday night (8th January) where the White Eagles will play the NSW Police side at 7pm.

*Some reshuffling on the Bankstown City board with secretary Louie Apostolovski departing with club administrator George Jackson filling the vacancy. On the pitch midfielder Chris Bradley made his long awaited return to the Lions side coming off the bench in his sides 3-1 loss. Caretaker coach George Fernandez is

Umlil on the overseas list, heading off to Yugoslavia for three weeks holidays. Umlil is expected to be in touch with

planning a number of trial games over the next few weeks in a bid to stamp his style on a side that is struggling at the wrong end of the competition table.

*Spare a thought for the Bulls young defender Ryan O'Shea. In his comeback game from a broken leg, O'Shea broke the same leg in the under 19s against Rockdale on Saturday night. Considered by coach Craig Sharpley to be an outstanding talent, he will unfortunately miss the remainder of the season.

While on the subject of injuries, Saints midfielder Ali Salim could be missing for quite sometime after suffering a neck injury in the match against Parramatta Eagles. Taken to hospital as a routine precaution, we'll keep you updated next week on his condition.



SOCCER NSW



ROUND 6 RESULTS

FIRST GRADE

Central Coast Coasties2
(J Maguire 33, J Monie 41')
Belconnen Blue Devils1
(C Larfield 62')

Bonnyrigg White Eagles3
(B Burgess 17/81', D Huseym 65')
Bankstown City Lions1
(C Luff 12m)

Bankstown City Demons1
(S Catanzaro 77')
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers3
(A Moric 54', Own Goal 60', Z Arambasic 76')

Rockdale City Suns2
(R Todorovski 57', S Najdoski 67')
Fairfield Bulls1
(M Hoenselaars 92')

C'bury-M'ville Olympic1
(S Utjesenovic 6')
Penrith Panthers1
(L O'Connell 75')

Parramatta Eagles4
(N Rivera 15/157', D Kukucka 52', B Delicata 90')
St George Saints0

UNDER 19

Central Coast Coasties0
Belconnen Blue Devils0

Bonnyrigg White Eagles1
(D Drca 84')
Bankstown City Lions0

Bankstown City Demons4
(B Stephan 12' Penalty, M Wood 56, R Galavyn 76, 87')
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers2
(C Musumeci 29', N Moulds 90')

Rockdale City Suns3
(S Tanevski 52', J Velegrinis 71', P Malakovski 80')
Fairfield Bulls2
(L Berbis 5', B Green 62')

C'bury-M'ville Olympic1
(G Iliopoulos 38')
Penrith Panthers2
(C Lima 75/90')

Parramatta Eagles2
(A Mondello 17', N Sama 37')
St George Saints0

FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	6	4	2	0	12	5	14
Central Coast Coasties	6	4	2	0	10	3	14
Rockdale City Suns	6	3	1	2	11	9	10
Parramatta Eagles	6	2	3	1	7	3	9
C'bury M'ville Olympic	6	2	3	1	7	6	9
Blacktown City Demons	6	2	2	2	8	9	8
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	6	2	1	3	8	9	7
Penrith Panthers	6	1	3	2	8	8	6
Belconnen Blue Devils	6	1	3	2	6	7	6
St George Saints	6	2	0	4	6	11	6
Bankstown City Lions	6	1	1	4	5	11	4
Fairfield Bulls	6	1	1	4	7	14	4

UNDER 19

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blacktown City Demons	6	5	1	0	25	6	16
Parramatta Eagles	6	4	2	0	14	5	14
Rockdale City Suns	6	4	1	1	13	9	13
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	6	4	0	2	13	9	12
Penrith Panthers	6	3	1	2	10	7	10
Belconnen Blue Devils	6	2	3	1	9	7	9
C'bury M'ville Olympic	6	2	1	3	15	12	7
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	6	2	1	3	6	9	7
St George Saints	6	1	1	4	4	10	4
Bankstown City Lions	6	0	3	3	6	16	3
Central Coast Coasties	6	0	3	3	4	14	3
Fairfield Bulls	6	0	1	5	4	19	1

NEXT ROUND

ROUND 7

FIRST GRADE

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Belconnen Blue Devils	v Rockdale City Suns	Sat 11 Jan	7.00pm	McKellar SC
Penrith Panthers	v Bankstown City Lions	Sat 11 Jan	7.00pm	Andrews Road Field
Fairfield Bulls	v C'bury M'ville Olympic	Sun 12 Jan	6.00pm	Nineveh Field
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	v Central Coast Coasties	Sun 12 Jan	6.00pm	Lambert Park
St George Saints	v Blacktown City Demons	Sun 12 Jan	6.00pm	St George Stadium
Parramatta Eagles	v Bonnyrigg White Eagles	Sun 12 Jan	6.00pm	Melita Stadium

UNDER 19

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Belconnen Blue Devils	v Rockdale City Suns	Sat 11 Jan	4.30pm	McKellar SC
Penrith Panthers	v Bankstown City Lions	Sat 11 Jan	5.00pm	Andrews Road Field
Fairfield Bulls	v C'bury-M'ville Olympic	Sun 12 Jan	4.00pm	Nineveh Field
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	v Central Coast Coasties	Sun 12 Jan	4.00pm	Lambert Park
St George Saints	v Blacktown City Demons	Sun 12 Jan	4.00pm	St George Stadium
Parramatta Eagles	v Bonnyrigg White Eagles	Sun 12 Jan	4.00pm	Melita Stadium

TOP GOALSCORERS

6 — Spase Najdoski (Rockdale City Suns)

- 4 — Luke Roodenberg (Blacktown City), James Monie (Central Coast), Zlatko Arambasic (APIA-Leichhardt),
3 — Rod Hutchinson (Penrith Panthers), Ante Moric (APIA-Leichhardt), Robert Todorovski (Rockdale City Suns),
2 — Paul Bourke (Canterbury-Marrickville), Steve Karavatakis (APIA-Leichhardt), Shane Knight (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Marko Perinovic (Belconnen Blue Devils), Matthew Borg (Fairfield Bulls), Allan Picken (Canterbury Marrickville), Aaron Burgess (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Colin Luff (Bankstown City), Marc Hoenselaars (Fairfield Bulls), Simon Catanzaro (Blacktown City), Clinton Larfield (Belconnen Blue Devils), Nathan Rivera (Parramatta Eagles),
1 — Kindness Agwu (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Denis Alilovic (Rockdale City Suns), Adam Anderson (Parramatta Eagles), Robert Angievski (Fairfield Bulls), Ismael Arrarte (Fairfield Bulls), Bruno Beddoni (St George), Daniel Borg (Parramatta Eagles), Jon-Paul Boutsos (APIA-Leichhardt), Luke Boyd (Penrith Panthers), Joe Bruni (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Mitchell Cook (Central Coast), Ben Deighan (Rockdale City Suns), Mark Falzon (Central Coast), Michael Hawrysiuk (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), George Issa (Bankstown City), Jason Lal (St George), Sean Mathews (Central Coast), Jose Mendes (St George), Michael O Riley (Canterbury Marrickville), Kam Rastall (Blacktown City), Jason Sciberras (Penrith Panthers), Norman Tome (Bankstown City Lions), Luke Tomich (Fairfield Bulls), Simon Verrender (St George), Daniel Macor (Belconnen), Mike Katz (Belconnen), Danny Hinton (Penrith), Luke O'Connell (Penrith), Andy Amegashie (Canterbury), Tom Quilty (Central Coast), Aron Binskin (Central Coast), Tony Mittiga (Parramatta), Sam La Rocca (Apia), Ali Chahine (St George), Angelo Petratos (St George), Robbie Gomez (Bankstown), Josh Maguire (Central Coast), Sasha Utjesenovic (Canterbury-Marrickville), Daniel McCann (Penrith Panthers), Ben Delicata (Parramatta Eagles), Daniel Kukucka (Parramatta Eagles)

For all the latest news, results and information check out www.nswpremierleague.com

SOCCER NSW

ROUND 7 PREVIEW



Belconnen Blue Devils vs Rockdale City Suns



Saturday 11th January, 2003 - 7.00pm
MCKELLAR SOCCER CENTRE, MCKELLAR

Belconnen travelled a long way last week for a 2-1 defeat at the hands of the Central Coast Coasties.

Although the road trip was traditionally difficult for the Blue Devils, coach Lino Fiorese would have been happier sharing the points with their northern counterparts rather than dwelling on the loss for the long trip home.

The loss placing the Canberra based team in the unlikely position of 9th on the ladder, but only one win out of the five. The lack of scoring ability has been a concern for the Blue Devils this season so far, with 6

goals from 6 games, but keep in mind that they have scored 2 against Bonnyrigg and 2 against Blacktown at home. Daniel Macor and Marko Penovic are the key players to push Belconnen back up the ladder, but are lacking the punch that they possessed in season's past.

In direct contrast to this, the Rockdale City Suns are turning the form guide upside down and now find themselves sitting third on the ladder. This is mostly due to the fine form of star striker Spase Najdoski who has bagged 6 goals from 6 games himself! Obviously the football gods have failed to tell Mile

Todoroski and Bill Pilovski that teams that get promoted must be seen and not heard in their first season. This Suns outfit is still making a lot of noise and as long as they don't burn out towards the end of the season will be looking at a finals berth yet again.

Belconnen have been unbeaten at home since the 12th of January last year so this is by no means a gimme for the Suns. With key Blue Devils such as Stewart Camara, Oscar Zemora, David Arranz and Stephen Kemp available for selection, a win or at least a draw for the home team is the most likely result.



Penrith Panthers vs Bankstown City Lions



Saturday 11th January, 2003 - 7.00pm
ANDREW ROAD FIELD, PENRITH

The last time Penrith were at Andrews Road they staged a controversial and thrilling comeback to snatch a sensational 3-3 draw against Rockdale City Suns.

Bankstown are a little in disarray following the resignation of coach Lee Sterrey and are engaged in the second of two away games on the trot, neither of them easy.

At Bonnyrigg they looked fine early on but tired badly and that will have the Panthers licking their lips for there are few fitter or harder working sides in this league.

If Bankstown can click and score some early goals it might be enough to see them home but as Rockdale

learned in the last game at Andrews Road a two goal cushion is not enough against a team of fighters like this Penrith outfit.

Bankstown will have Chris Bradley ready to resume in midfield after a delayed start to the new campaign and supporters will be excited to discover how their new star import, Fernando Santos, will show up.

The 32 year old has been snapped up from Penarth following their Australian tour in recent weeks and this former Uruguayan international should add some further experience to a side that has much of that in abundance.

What it probably needs most right now, however, is application and focus combined with wholehearted performances for 90 minutes.

Penarth come off a tough game at Henson Park where they worked and fought hard for the point which has been their trademark all along.

They toiled long and hard and seemed unlikely to crack it until a thunderbolt from the blue by the industrious Daniel McCann pulled a point out of the fire.

Expect more of the same against Bankstown who will be all out for a win and may leave themselves exposed long enough for the Panthers to pounce.



Fairfield Bulls vs Canterbury-Marrickville Olympic



Sunday 12th January, 2003 - 6.00pm
NINEVEH FIELD, EDENSOR PARK

Fifth versus last doesn't exactly have the mouth watering, but given the attacking nature of both these teams, this could well be an interesting clash.

With speculation mounting over the coaching position of Craig Sharpley, the Bulls will need to put their best foot forward this week, else their season could be all but over by the halfway mark.

"Our performance against Rockdale was solid though our lack of composure in front of goals cost us," said Sharpley.

"We played well in patches but at this level if we don't put the ball in

the net you can't win games, simple as that."

On the visit of Canterbury, Sharpley was non plussed. "The big bonus for us this week is that we have twenty fit players from which to select our best possible side and every position will be coming under close consideration until we turn this bad form about."

With the likes of Sprod, Snyder Hoenseaars, Borg, Van Bentum and Connolly all lining up for the first time this season, it could be the veritable turning point in the Bulls season. A win or at least a solid performance is demanded of the Bulls this

week to justify their position in the top flight.

Canterbury coach Greg Woodhouse continues to roll along with his Bernes side, one loss his only blemish in six outings.

Their draw against Penrith was full of merit with the sides defence again standing up in the face of concerted pressure from the Panthers.

With no major injury concerns in the ranks, Woodhouse is expected to name an unchanged lineup. With so much riding on this match for the Bulls, this little black duck is tipping a draw and Sharps, to remain in harness for yet another week.



A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers vs Central Coast Coasties



Sunday 12th January, 2003 - 6.00pm
LAMBERT PARK, LEICHHARDT

A.P.I.A. has managed to remain unbeaten so far and they are provided with a pretty solid test at Lambert Park this weekend.

A.P.I.A. continued their good form by beating Blacktown for the second season in succession last weekend and after weathering a storm from the Demons in the first half and surviving many close calls buckled down to go out and beat the home side convincingly.

Former Demons like Paul Dee and Damon Langan would have been delighted to put one over their old club for the second season running, though Langan could not play because, like this week, the ex

Blacktown skipper had to sit that one out as part of a three game suspension.

With John-Paul Boutros absent for the weekend, a likely long term injury to Jeremy Brown and doubts about the fitness of both Joe Monic and Tony Tesoro, the ranks are thinning at a crucial time, but coach Les De Celis at least looks likely to unveil a new signing, that of a striker.

Central Coast has the determination and discipline to cope with all a star-studded Apia can throw at them and maybe snatch some goals on cleverly orchestrated counter-attacking endeavours.

A.P.I.A. won't be thought off-guard, however, mindful of last seasons dropping of far too many points at their compact Leichhardt home.

Thus far they have managed to keep an unbeaten home record, but the lack of goals at home may mean that this is going to be yet another struggle for them to gain a winning edge.

A draw does look the likely outcome here but Apia really needs more home wins if it is to forge clear and make a first Premiership a reality. But it would be a brave pundit that would deny Central Coast a chance after such an impressive start to the season.



St George Saints vs Blacktown City Demons



Sunday 12th January, 2003 - 6.00pm
ST GEORGE STADIUM, ROCKDALE

A rather interesting matchup on paper which could provide plenty of fireworks.

Ten years ago Bruno Beddou and Abbas Saad were two of the most feared strikers in the land and the prospect of seeing the two line-up together would have been priceless.

Times have changed and while the year might be 2003, to see both players take on one of the toughest defences in the league is well worth the price of admission.

Throw in the contribution of the lively Orhan Dincer who is back

from suspension and all of a sudden this game could go either way. The possible loss of midfielder Ali Salim through a neck injury may be a drawback to coach Spanoudakis's plans for this week.

Blacktown City were outgunned last weekend by a fired up A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt 3-1 and while you can count on one hand the number of times they have lost two games on the trot in the past five years, they shouldn't take their opponents too lightly.

Bonnyrigg and Fairfield did and they're scalps are mounted on the

Saints dressing room wall as a reminder for those clubs who take the Saints less than seriously at home.

Demons coach Brian Brown is never one to send his side out underdone and on that alone, expect them to knock over the plucky home side in a close one.

Saints goalkeeper Michael Xuereb and the defensive back four will need to have an early night on Saturday so they can be on their game to prevent a blowout a similar to last week to defeat



Parramatta Eagles vs Bonnyrigg White Eagles



Saturday 12th January, 2003 - 6.00pm
MELITA STADIUM, SOUTH GRANVILLE

Few sides are as hard to beat at home as the Eagles but if any team is likely to cause an upset it would have to be Bonnyrigg whose past exploits have always made these games impossible to predict.

The near watertight Parramatta defence means the White Eagles will need to be very inventive to crack it for a win, but a draw is well within their reach.

Following their impressive 3-1 win over Bankstown, Bonnyrigg will be confident going into this game and the promise of the unveiling of another new signing before the game should give travelling supporters great hopes.

Aaron Burgess settled into his role as a support act for Kindness Agwu with ease and nabbed two fine goals for his new side. Parramatta will have their hands full containing him and if he has another new strike partner it could prove too much for the Melita Stadium side.

Teenager Simonovic delighted coach Lyube Jancev with his first start at the heart of the Bonnyrigg defence last Saturday night and is certain to retain his spot. If Bobby Dragas manages to get back from a European mid-season jaunt soon he may well find it impossible to regain his spot, long guaranteed in the side, subject to full fitness.

The midfield seems to be functioning well too and we could well see the Bonnyrigg of old on a weekly basis before too long.

That spells danger for Parramatta whose defence has been their mainstay this season yet who have struggled to score in all of their games.

Until the St George game goals had been at a premium for John Callejas Eagles but with the successful introduction of Nathan Rivera into the attack perhaps the scoring will increase now and the Eagles will begin to stretch opposition defences.

It promises to be a good, open game and one that ought to bring in a healthy crowd to Melita Stadium.



SOCCER NSW



SAPPHIRES JOIN MATILDA'S SQUAD FOR THE AUSTRALIA CUP



Danielle Small

Australian Coach Adrian Santrac, has named four NSW Sapphires; Kelly Golebiowski, Joanne Peters, Danielle Small and Thea Slatyer in the 18-member Matildas Squad which will compete in the 5th Australia Cup in Canberra from the 26th of January to the 1st of February against Sweden, Mexico and South Korea.

Whilst Golebiowski and Peters are established Australian representatives with 47 and 41 caps respectively, this will be Small's first appearance for the National squad since the disappointment of narrowly missing selection for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Team through injury. It will also be the first opportunity for Slatyer to appear in the national team on home soil after making her international debut at the 2002 US NIKE Cup.

Golebiowski and Peters were not part of the NSW Sapphires squad for the recent Women's National League season, due to Golebiowski pursuing trials in the United States and Peters playing for the legendary Santos of Brazil and also doing some volunteer work in South America.

Small who joined the NSW Sapphires in 2002 after beginning her representative career with the Northern NSW Pride, has proved to be a versatile player having performed in the roles of defender, midfielder and forward during the past season.

"It was a nice surprise to be back in National team after just one season of the National League with the Sapphires," said Small.

My main aim is to use the Australia Cup to establish my position again with the Matildas and everything goes to plan to make sure I help Australia qualify for the World Cup. That's a dream that I have had for quite some time."

Slatyer unfortunately missed the majority of the 2002/203 WNSL, but has been rewarded for her U19 World Championship performances in Canada and at the US NIKE Cup last year with retention of her spot in the Matilda's squad.

"I'm really happy to be selected in such a strong squad, but now my biggest challenge is to secure a place in the starting eleven," said Slatyer.



Thea Slatyer

(Photo courtesy of Geoff Howden Photography & Inside Sport)

"I've been training hard since the Grand Final and over Christmas and New Years. Most of it has been fitness work, by myself, and I'm looking forward to go into camp with the other girls," concluded Slatyer.

Two other Sapphires, the legendary Anissa Tann and goalkeeper Cassie Kell, have also been named in the Australian World Cup Qualifiers Squad, with Santrac leaving open the possibility of increasing the size of this group. The squad assembles at the Australian Institute of Sport for a training camp commencing 15 January.

NSW POLICE WIN FIRST LEG OF ANNUAL CHARITY CUP AGAINST NSW FIRE BRIGADE

By Doug McKenzie

The NSW Police representative side scored two goals to nil as they celebrated the defence of the first leg of the annual Charity Cup at Toyota Park.

The Cup Game featured as the leadup match to the Olympic Sharks and Melbourne Knights on 29 December.

Police midfielder Vlad Kutle broke the deadlock in the 30th minute after connecting with a corner from Martin Lynch. In a physical encounter the Fire Brigade narrowly missed scoring after a goalmouth scramble a few minutes earlier, while the Police keeper former Sydney Olympic keeper, John Karoubas also cleared a strong cross in the 6 yard box.

In the second half the competitiveness continued with each side counter attacking. Former Northern Spirit midfielder Paul Wearne had his first run with the Police and blended in well starting a number of attacking moves. In the 75th minute Justin Hadley, Captain of the Police side, powerfully headed



NSW Police Representative Soccer Team Victorious against NSW Fire Brigade.

another corner from Martin Lynch, from the front post to secure the two nil win.

Superintendent Warren Fletcher, President of the Police Soccer Club, said, "he was pleased with the

side performance and seeing a number of new young players who recently graduated from the Police College playing with the side. It's always an important event to support the Charity Cup and both

the Police and Fire Brigade officers do all of this in their own time".

Mr Fletcher said, "We owe a lot of thanks to the Olympic Sharks and Soccer Australia for approving and supporting the Police and Fire Brigade to actually be able to hold this event prior to the National League match of the Australian Champions. We also owe a lot of thanks to the Olympic Sharks Supporters for being so generous and supporting our fundraising efforts on this day with some \$3000 being raised for Police Legacy, Homicide Victim Support Group and the Childrens Hospital Burns Unit."

The second leg of the Charity Cup is to be played at another National League Club venue before the end of the current season.

NSW Police Soccer Club would like to thank the Olympic Sharks for their continued support of the Charity Cup, together with Club supporters: Paul Fabian and Co Solicitors, Police Association of NSW, Percival Publishing, Police Credit Union, Ashfield City Council and the NSW Police Council of Sport.



SOCCER NSW



COACHING CALENDAR 2003

11 to 19 January 18/19 January 25/26/27 January	1st Annual Sydney U-17 Tournament ESP Coaching Course ESP Player Camp: Born 1989 — U/14	DAILY 9.00am-4.00pm LIVE-IN
1/2/8/9 February 1/2 February 15/16/22/23 February & 1 March 15-16 February 19 February	Youth/Intermediate Licence Course ESP Players: Born 1990 — U/13 Senior Licence Course Goalkeeper Course / Senior & Junior Licence for Females ESP Coaches Updates	8.30am-5.00pm LIVE-IN (Part A) 8.30am-5.00pm 8.30am-5.00pm 7.00pm-9.00pm
8-9 March 19 March 22/23 March	Junior/Youth/Senior Instructors Course Update/Refresher (National Coaching Scheme) Sports General Course	8.30am-5.00pm 7.00pm-9.00pm 8.30am-5.00pm
5/6 April 14/15 April	Fitness for Soccer Course ESP Players Camp: Born 1990 — U/13	8.30am-5.00pm LIVE-IN
3/4/10/11 May 17/18/24/25/31 May 21 May	Youth/Intermediate Licence Course Senior Licence Course (for Players) (Part A) Update/Refresher (National Coaching Scheme)	8.30am-5.00pm 8.30am-5.00pm 7.00pm-9.00pm
7/8 June 14.15/21/22 June 25 June	Goalkeeper Course / Youth State Licence Course ESP Coaches Update	8.30am-5.00pm 8.30am-5.00pm 7.00pm-9.00pm
5 to 11 July 14/15/16 July 30 July	Friendship Games Boys State Selection Camp U15 / U16 VENUE TBA Update/Refresher (National Coaching Scheme)	DAILY LIVE-IN 7.00pm-9.00pm
9/10/16/17 August	Youth/Intermediate Licence Course	8.30am-5.00pm
10 September 13/14 September 17 September 20/21 September 26 September to 4 October	Update/Refresher (National Coaching Scheme) Coever Instructors Course ESP Coaches Update ESP Players Camp: Born 1990 — U13 Boys National Championships	7.00pm-9.00pm 8.30am-5.00pm 7.00pm-9.00pm LIVE-IN DAILY
11/12 October 18/19 October 25/26 October	Sports General Course FINAL Assessment Weekend: Senior/State Fitness for Soccer Course	8.30am-5.00pm 8.30am-5.00pm 8.30am-5.00pm
1/2/8/9 November 12 November 15/16/22/23/29 November 6/7/13/14 December	Youth/Intermediate Licence Course ESP Coaches Update Senior Licence Course (Part A) Youth/Intermediate Licence Course	8.30am-5.00pm 7.00pm-9.00pm 8.30am-5.00pm 8.30am-5.00pm

For more information please, contact Tricia at Soccer NSW by email (tricia@soccernsw.com.au) or phone (02) 9629 1800

POSITION VACANT



STATE COACHING POSITIONS

Soccer NSW is seeking expressions of interest for the following NSW State Team Coaching positions within the Elite Development Program.

- Under 14 Boys
- Under 14 Girls
- Under 16 Girls
- Under 18 Girls

Essential Criteria:

- Minimum qualification of Senior Licence (ACC approved accreditation)
- Experience working with elite youth soccer players
- Sound knowledge of Soccer NSW Youth League structure and competition
- Experience planning and implementing coaching programs at an elite level
- Good communication and management skills
- To be eligible for the U14 Boys position, coaches must be currently involved in the Elite Soccer Player (ESP) Program

Soccer NSW is an equal opportunity employer and all applicants must complete a prohibited employment declaration.

Please forward your application by Friday the 17th January, 2003 marked Private & Confidential to:

Linda Christie
Human Resources Manager
Soccer NSW

Post - PO Box 6146, Baulkham Hills BC NSW 2153

Fax - 02 9629 3770

Email - linda@soccernsw.com.au

For more information phone 02 9629 1800 or email info@soccernsw.com.au

Soccer - The World Game

SOCCER NSW

Junior Licence / Level 1 Coaching Course

"WHY SHOULD THE BOYS HAVE ALL THE FUN?"

When: Saturday 15th & Sunday the 16th of February 2003

What Time: 9.00am-5.00pm (both days)

Where: Valentine Sports park, Glenwood, NSW

Who: Any Women or Girls with an interest in Soccer
(must be over 15 years)

How Much: \$98.00 (including GST)



For more information or an application form, contact Tricia at Soccer NSW by email (tricia@soccernsw.com.au) or phone (02) 9629 1800

For more information about Coaching accreditation courses, check out our website.
www.soccernsw.com.au



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ACTION FROM ROUND 7 OF THE NSW PREMIER LEAGUE.

(above) Bonnyrigg White
Eagles vs Bankstown City
Lions.

(left & right) Canterbury-
Marrickville Olympic vs
Penrith Panthers



FIRST ANNUAL SYDNEY TOURNAMENT FOR U-17's DRAW

GROUP A

- NSW INSTITUTE OF SPORT
- ST GEORGE SOCCER ASSOCIATION
- HAJDUK WANDERERS

GROUP B

- WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH
- MACLEAY VALLEY RANGERS
- PARRAMATTA CITY
- BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES

MATCH DAY 1 — Saturday 11th January

1. NSWIS v ST GEORGE 6.00pm
2. PARRA. CITY v BONNYRIGG 6.00pm
3. NEPEAN v HAJDUK 7.45pm
4. WSHS v NORTH COAST 7.45pm

MATCH DAY 2 — Sunday 12th January

5. NORTH COAST v BONNYRIGG 6.00pm
6. ST GEORGE v HAJDUK 6.00pm
7. NSWIS v NEPEAN 7.45pm
8. WSHS v PARRA. CITY 7.45pm

MATCH DAY 3 — Tuesday 14th January

9. ST GEORGE v NEPEAN 6.00pm
10. NSWIS v HAJDUK 6.00pm
11. NORTH COAST v PARRA. CITY 7.45pm
12. WSHS v BONNYRIGG 7.45pm

PLATE SEMI-FINALS Thursday 16th January

13. 3rd/A v 4th/B 5.30pm
14. 3rd/B v 4th/A 7.30pm

CUP SEMI-FINALS Thursday 17th January

15. 1st/B v 2nd/A 5.30pm
16. 1st/A v 2nd/B 7.30pm

FINALS DAY

17. SATURDAY JAN 18 PLATE 3rd/4th PLAY-OFF 3.00pm

PLATE FINAL

18. WINNER 13 v WINNER 14 5.00pm

CUP 3rd/4th PLAY-OFF

19. LOSER 15 v LOSER 16 5.00pm

CUP FINAL

20. WINNER 15 v WINNER 16 7.00pm

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Young Socceros 2002/03



(LEFT - RIGHT)

Back Row

Front Row

Spase Dilevski, Vince Lia, Michael Baird, Mark Tsiortas, Wayne Heath, Dustin Wells, Carl Valeri, David Tarka, Alex Wilkinson, Daniel Plorkowski, Alex Brosque, Matthew Osman, Matthew McKay.
Ange Postecoglou (coach), Jonathon Richter, Franco Parisi, Tom Willis, Scott McDonald, Nathan Coe, Adriano Pelligrino, Massimo Murocca, Tony Franken (Goalkeeper Coach), Ernie Merrick (Assistant Coach).